

THE NEW MIDDLE AGES

STRANGE BEAUTY

ECOCRITICAL APPROACHES *to*
EARLY MEDIEVAL LANDSCAPE

Alfred K. Siewers



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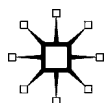
*Strange Beauty: Ecocritical Approaches to Early
Medieval Landscape*
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Alfred K. Siewers

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STRANGE BEAUTY

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*To Olesya, Nick, Kevin, and Papas Pavlos and Mark;
and in memory of Karl, Marjorie, and Kristine*

Let us adore the Lord,
Maker of wonderful works:
Great-bright heaven with its angels;
On earth the fair-waved sea.

—From “Lord of Creation,” anonymous
ninth-century Irish poem

There are some, although few indeed, to whom divine grace has given power to contemplate the whole orb of the earth and the sea and heavens around it, brightly and most manifestly, with scope of mind miraculously enlarged in one and the same moment as if beneath a single ray of the sun.

—Attributed to Columcille of Iona

Time is but the stream I go a-fishing in...I would drink deeper, fish in the sky whose bottom is pebbly with stars.

—Henry David Thoreau, *Walden*

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PREFACE

This project grew from interest and research in environmental history and narrative, and in medieval studies. I grew up in inner-city Chicago, amid neglected parks designed by the pioneering ecological restorationist Jens Jensen, an overgrown backyard inspired by his prairie landscape style, and native oak groves preserved in a nearby cemetery. Our neighborhood was near the site of my grandfather's subdivided farm, from whose fields had come old Indian relics stored in our basement. There, along a glacial-sea ridge near Lake Michigan, on a Native American treaty line still traceable on the street grid, I became acutely aware of landscape and interested in cultural narratives of it. This was reinforced by devoted parents who were teachers interested in local ecology and history, and by my discovery in junior high, in the basement of the old Kroch's and Brentano's bookstore under the Wabash L, of the Everyman English edition of *The Mabinogion*. My fate seemed sealed as I sat on the floor absorbed by the presentation of landscape in that small book, while trains rumbled overhead and in the subway below. The end result of that encounter is now in your hands.

Later, while doing doctoral work in medieval studies, I was also chronicling the fate of the ecological restoration movement in the oak savannah preserves of metropolitan Chicago, an effort that resulted in an article published first in the University of Wisconsin at Madison Arboretum's *Restoration and Management Notes* (now the *Journal of Ecological Restoration*) in 1998, reprinted in revised form in *Whole Earth* in 2001. I had firsthand knowledge of, and involvement in, that restoration movement with its principals, having earlier covered it as a regional writer for the *Chicago Sun-Times* and briefly as a staff writer for *The Christian Science Monitor*. In the process I came to see in practical terms the important role of cultural narratives that can engage human communities in responding creatively to environmental devastation. The lack of such highlighted narratives in the Chicago area resulted in a political backlash against restorationists, who in effect were reconstructing an ecological narrative from accounts of early settlers and reports of Native American land-management practices, while gathering rare native seeds from pioneer cemeteries and railroad embankments, and using fire to manage vanishing oak savannah on public lands around Chicago. A resulting moratorium on their work severely disrupted this effort for a time. But the importance of the narrative the restorationists developed, slowly and often in discourse not apparent to the public, revealed itself physically in walking through their work: The sun-dappled oak savannah in spring at Somme

Woods, filled with wildflowers, butterflies, and native birds, so different from far less ecologically diverse (often seemingly monocultural) overgrown thickets elsewhere in unrestored forest preserves. I also became intrigued at how past transcendental narratives of regional landscape—most notably Daniel Burnham's Swedenborgian-tinged lakefront Plan for Chicago but also including the Classical-style Christian Science churches (once attended by some of my mother's family) on the city's old boulevards and Chicago's network of European-style ethnic Catholic parish churches (once frequented by my father's extended family)—had ultimately, if grandly, failed.

The project in hand evolved from a subsequent doctoral dissertation (another related portion of which can be found in "Landscapes of Conversion: Guthlac's Mound and Grendel's Mere as Expressions of Anglo-Saxon Nation Building" [*Viator* 34 (2003): 1-39, revised and reprinted in *The Postmodern Beowulf: A Critical Casebook*, ed. Eileen A. Joy, Mary K. Ramsey, and Bruce D. Gilchrist (Morgantown, WV: West Virginia University Press, 2006)]. *Strange Beauty* is offered here in hopes that, in a small way, it may help advance understanding of the workings of narrative as an environmental phenomenon, and the potential for literary studies to contribute to that understanding, with even perhaps some indirect support to efforts by ecological restorationists who work urgently in many fields worldwide today.

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St. Beuno's well in rural northwest Wales; native monastic centers associated with the saint probably played a role in compiling the Four Branches of the *Mabinogi*. (Author's photo.)

CHAPTER 1

ARCHIPELAGO AND OTHERWORLD

In the early Irish story *Immram Brain*, whose origins probably trace back at least to the lost eighth-century Book of Druimm Snechtai,¹ the legendary Irish ruler Bran mac Febail is near home when he hears music behind him. Although he keeps looking back for the source of it, the music always stays elusively behind. He falls asleep finally in its sweetness. When he wakes, he is lying next to a silver branch whose white blossoms are hard to distinguish from the stem. When he takes the branch into the stronghold where his warriors are gathered, suddenly they see a strangely dressed woman, who sings a song of the otherworldly realm Emain and tells of how she has brought from there a silver branch of an apple tree.² So sweetly she sings of her distant otherworldly island that Bran and a party of men sail off to find it, only to discover in their many adventures that the sea itself is an Otherworld, and that their home cojoins this multidimensional archipelago of elements and beings that ultimately makes it an Otherworld as well. While on his adventure, Bran meets Manannán mac Lir, a sea god who shows him that the ocean is teeming with hidden life. Addressing Bran, Manannán says:

Cáine amrae lasin mBran
ina churchán tar muir nglan;
os mé im charput do chéin,
is mag scothach imma-réid.

A n-as muir glan
don nóí bro(i)nig i-tá Bran,
is mag meld co n-immut scoth
damsa i carput dá roth.

At-chí Bran
lín tonn tibri tar muir glan;
At-chíu cadéin i mMaig Mon
scotha cennderca cen on.

Taitnit gabra lir i sam
sella roisc ro-shiri Bran;
bru(i)ndit scotha srúaim de mil
i crích Manannáin maic Lir.

Lí na fairci fora-taí,
 geldod mora imme-raí,
 rossert buide ocus glass:
 is talam nád écomrass.

Lingit ích bricc ass de brú,
 a mmuir find for n-aicci-siu;
 it loíg, it úain co ndagdath,
 co cairdi, cen imarbath...

Mét in maige, lín in tshlóig,
 taitnit líga co nglanbóaid;
 findruth aircit, drep[p]a óir,
 táircet fáilti caich imróil.

Clu(i)che n-aímin n-inmeldag
 aigdit fri find-imborbag,
 fir is mná míne fo doss
 cen peccad cen immarboss.

Is íar mbarr fedo ro-sná
 do churchán tar indrada,
 fil fid fo mess i-mbí gnóe
 fo braine do beccnoë.

Fid co mbláth ocus torad
 fors-mbí fine firbolad,
 fid cen erchra[e] cen esbad
 fors-fil du(i)lli co n-órdath.

Fil dún ó thossuch dú(i)le
 cen aíss, cen forbthe n-ú(i)re
 ní-frescam de mbeth anguss,
 nín-táraill int immarbuss.

[An extraordinary beauty it is for Bran
 In his coracle across the clear sea:
 but to me in my chariot from a distance
 It is a flowery plain on which he rides about.

What is clear sea
 For the prowed skiff in which Bran is,
 That is a delightful plain full of flowers
 To me in a chariot of two wheels.

Bran sees
 multiplicitous waves beating across the clear sea:
 I myself see in Mag Mon
 Red-headed flowers without blemish.

Sea-horses glisten in summer
 As far as glances of Bran's eye traverse:
 Blossoms pour forth a stream of honey
 In the land of Manannán son of Ler.

The sparkle of the expanses that you go over,
 The brightness of the sea, on which you row about,

Yellow and blue-grey-green are spread out,
It is earth that is great.

Speckled salmon leap from the womb
Of the shining sea, on which you look;
They are calves, beautifully colored lambs
At peace without strife...

The expanse of the plain, the number of the host,
Beauties shining with bright quality,
A fair stream of silver, stairs of gold,
Bring a welcome at every great feast.

A pleasant game, most delightful,
They play in fair contention,
Men and gentle women under a bush,
Without sin, without crime.

Along the top of a wood has floated
Your coracle across ridges,
There is a beautiful wood with fruit
Under the prow of your little boat.

A wood with blossom and fruit,
On which is the vine's true fragrance,
A wood without decay, without defect,
On which are leaves of golden hue.

We are from the beginning of creation
Without age, without decay of earth-freshness.
We do not expect weakness from decline.
The sin has not come to us.³

Bran here encounters a doubly enfolded landscape. The sea is the watery plain and atmosphere that seem to encompass a parallel reality. Or is there a paradisiacal spiritual dimension encompassing the sea? Bran's Otherworld experiences throughout the story either way can be read also as calling into question the objective reality of his homeland. This effect of the Otherworld trope here and throughout early traditions of the Irish Sea parallels the feminist theorist Luce Irigaray's discussion of place in relation to sexual difference, invoking landscape as a bodily femaleness both enveloped and enveloping, reflected in the very name for the Otherworld of *Tir inna mBan*, "the land of women," in *Immram Brain*.⁴ The happy, flowered plain of sport in the sea includes honeyed rivers. It is a peaceful land. Herds of intensely colored animals, a host of beings, gold cloths, and silver streams meld the natural and the artistic. There is a free sexuality and no Original Sin or old age, amid a fruited, fragrant forest with gold leaves, above which floats Bran's coracle, as if on air rather than water. This imaginary, spiritual, yet natural realm is presumed to be distinct from the everyday human realm of Bran's hall. The otherworldly woman visitor originally describes it to Bran there in terms of a distant island to which he must sail, but it is also contiguous with the sea that adjoins Bran's own home, which other Irish texts suggest is the area around Lough Foyle, an inlet near what is now Derry in northern Ireland. The Otherworld here is in that sense not only mappable but cosmogonic, for

other early Irish narratives recount how a flood covered a kingdom to create the Lough.⁵ That antediluvian realm is the homeland equivalent of the oversea prelapsarian Paradise evoked by Manannán: A Paradise lost in historic time but regained in a timeless mythic space.

The shifting borders of this liminal realm are marked not only by geographical features but also by a fluid temporality. Ages have passed while Bran's companions themselves think they have only been gone for a short time. Their story is now an ancient legend in Ireland. When they sail back, one of Bran's band attempts to jump back out of the boat to the group's home shore. To the imagined horror of all, he instantaneously grows older by centuries, and is reduced to dust. Yet there also are numinous beings in the text who span time as well as space. Verses in the narrative meld prophecies of the Incarnation of Christ the Creator God, and of the birth of Manannán's son Mongán, who reputedly is an historical king of Ulster in the Christian era. Through Mongán's cosmic kingship and Christ's divinity, the Otherworld is immanent within human history as well.

Textually the Otherworld also constitutes a multidimensional trope, a multiform of oral and literary sources probably shaped in part by performance.⁶ *Immram Brain* is one version of a tale associated with an older lost manuscript, and also part of an amorphous body of traditions relating to Bran.⁷ It has connections to a larger network of native or Celtic Otherworld narratives,⁸ to biblical traditions, and even to analogues in later Welsh narratives and French traditions of the Holy Grail.⁹ The *immram* ("rowing about") genre to which the stories of Bran's voyage arguably belong focuses on exploits in exploring faraway islands, and the genre reached its most popular medieval form in various redactions of the voyages of St. Brendan. The saint encounters a spectrum of Christian ascetic practices on a chain of islands that evokes the native Otherworld.¹⁰ Through the figure of Mongán, elsewhere identified with Finn, *Immram Brain* is also drawn into the orbit of the Finn cycle of adventure tales concerning the youth-warband or *fian* and its eponymous avatar, echoed by names of the modern Fenians and Huck Finn, inhabiting the margins of Irish society and of the Irish countryside.

As suggested by *Immram Brain*, the realm of the Otherworld in various early narratives from around the Irish Sea extends to physical dimensions besides sea and islands. The watery Otherworld encompasses rivers such as the Boyne, springs and inlets of the sea such as Lough Foyle, and holy wells associated with saints and the waters of baptism. The aerial Otherworld is manifested in the birds in the tree in *Immram Brain*, who are elsewhere identified with the neutral angels (as in the *Navigatio S. Brendani*) or the souls of the just (*Dá brón flatha nime*), birds often having otherworldly associations in early Celtic narratives, as in the bird troop in *Tógail Bruidne Dá Derga*. The early Irish even imagined the biblical Paradise as being above the world, near the aerial waters of the creation account in Genesis and the clouds in which Christ disappeared and will return.¹¹ They most famously identified the terrestrial Otherworld with the *side* or mounds (usually Neolithic mounds specifically identified in Irish topography) that form portals to it in early Irish and later extant early Welsh lore, as will be explored further in the next chapter. Other narratives explicitly incorporate Irish and Welsh topography into the Otherworld. In all these cases, the

Otherworld is a type of overlay or multiplex landscape that integrates aspects of spiritual, imaginative, and natural realms of human life and the physical environment, including wilderness and animals, and that permits shape-shifting as well as transport through time and space.¹² It often is expressed as a mirroring image that is relational, transcendent yet immanent, “a landscape that was, at the same time, reassuringly familiar and hauntingly different,”¹³ as the historian Benjamin Hudson puts it. It could support the Irish high kingship and threaten it, reflecting a continuation of pre-Christian beliefs outside of monastic cultural networks, yet in Christian contexts.¹⁴ Historian Robin Stacey Chapman adds, “In few places was the boundary between the sacred and the secular less clear than in the Celtic lands, where the natural beauty of the place was matched only by the relentless meddling of the supernatural beings that inhabited it.”¹⁵ The Celticist Marie Sjoestedt provided the most memorable definition:

A discussion of the mythological world of the Celts encounters at once a peculiar difficulty, namely, that when seeking to approach it you find that you are already within. We are accustomed to distinguish the supernatural from the natural. . . . The Celts knew nothing of this, if we are entitled to judge their attitude from Irish tradition. Here there is continuity, in space and in time, between what we call our world and the other world—or worlds. Some peoples, such as the Romans, think of their myths historically; the Irish think of their history mythologically; and so, too, of their geography.¹⁶

In this study I explore the Otherworld trope in early Irish Sea narratives from a new combination of historical and environmental perspectives. This rereading of the trope in the context of ecology provides the opportunity to query modern definitions of nature through landscape, in order to understand better the reciprocal relation of nature as nonhuman physical “fact” with nature as a constructed human value.¹⁷ Cultures in the pre-twelfth-century Irish Sea province often did not articulate definitions of nature in any discrete modern philosophical or scientific sense. They expressed their experience of nature holistically in theories, practices, and narratives combining theology, asceticism, anthropology, and everyday life. An understanding of landscape as a form of narrative image mediating between the physical environment and human culture and thus crossing conventional boundaries between the biological and the imaginary, the body and the environment, the subjective and the objective, informs this project. This study reads the Otherworld landscape as not only a textual narrative in the modern sense, but also in a non-modern sense as an iconographic narrative in which the text functions as an image based in geography and in what phenomenologists call the “lived body.”¹⁸

It is through such approaches to landscape, place, and space that environmental literary study, or ecocriticism, finds its most productive entrée to early medieval literature, in tandem with environmental philosophy. Examining the Otherworld trope as an embodied reading experience, in the sense of intertextuality connecting geography, ascetic theology, and visual theory, we can come to understand it as embodying a type of cultural symbolism that defines nature intersubjectively, across boundaries between the human and the nonhuman. The

native origins of the Otherworld may well originally lie in prehistoric storytellers reflecting on nonhuman temporalities, including those of plants, animals, and geology. Yet it became part of a cosmopolitan literary milieu as well.

The time is ripe for such rereading of a trope long associated with overromanticized and anachronistic views of “eco-friendly” Celts, an exoticization that obscures its real value as a model for empathetic human interaction with the environment.¹⁹ Historical and literary studies of the past two decades provide a clearer picture of the cosmopolitan contexts of Otherworld narratives. Further, burgeoning fields of environmental literary criticism and environmental philosophy (not to mention medieval landscape studies) afford new vehicles for questioning the relation of the Otherworld to cultural constructions of nature, to social interaction with the physical environment, and to sliding linguistic definitions of nature as both an essence and as a dynamic relation between the living and nonliving, and being and nonbeing.

Since much of modern environmental philosophy can be regarded as a gloss on Martin Heidegger’s anti-modernist definition of Being as both hidden and appearing, that will be used as a starting point for defining nature in this study, in terms of understanding nature both in bodily terms and as a process found in the dynamic relationship of those hidden and appearing qualities.²⁰ Likewise, the environmental phenomenologist Edward S. Casey’s definition of landscape as the appearing of “place-world,” an interactive region mediating between infinite space and experiential place, will be a baseline for this discussion (“place” being defined by Casey as experience of difference in an event linking creational chaos with cosmological order; “space” being a more abstract universal matrix privileged by modern thinking).²¹ Ultimately, the ninth-century Irish philosopher John Scottus Eriugena’s definition of nature as including both being and nonbeing, and his cosmic sense of landscape influenced by both non-Augustinian patristics and desert asceticism, will be foundational in discussing the Otherworld’s own philosophical and empirical contexts.²² And in those contexts “nonbeing” (meaning that which is not readily apparent or instrumentally at hand, yet omnipresent both as mysterious essence and part of dynamic process) provides a working definition for “spiritual” in relation to nature.

Strange Beauty contextualizes the Otherworld trope in terms of such a philosophical “deep structure” in relation to the literary and environmental milieu of the Irish Sea province.²³ While acknowledging what Jonathan M. Wooding calls “shared common historical and geographical circumstances” of early Irish and Welsh Christian literary cultures, as well as the persistent influence upon them of the monastic movement originating in the Eastern Mediterranean, it seeks to avoid simplistic identification of a romanticized “Celtic Christianity” with “desert fathers indistinguishable from their Egyptian counterparts.”²⁴ It recognizes that relevant early Welsh literature survives in later or more ambiguously datable forms than early Irish texts. Yet if it is important not to allow ahistorical conceptions to erase distinctive differences among the cultures that constituted the Irish Sea province, it is equally important not to allow any anachronistic sense of monolithic Western Christianity or “the medieval” to erase a sense of distinctive regional Celtic cultural traditions from before the watershed Norman

conquests. Examining early medieval intellectual culture around the Irish Sea, for example, reveals a common influence of Cassianic desert monasticism that cuts across ecclesiastical divisions such as the so-called *Romani* and *Hibernenses* discussed in later chapters, the different emphases in views of nature detected by John Carey between seventh-century writings associated with southern Ireland and texts slightly later from more northern monastic networks, or disparities in material prosperity and survival of early texts between Ireland and Wales.²⁵ In reading the Otherworld as a trope of the early medieval Irish Sea archipelago, this study relies on new explications by Carey and Hudson (among others) of regional connections and contacts that overcome deep-rooted but anachronistic scholarly binaries of “English” and “Celtic,” “Welsh” and “Irish,” as well as on religious historian Thomas O’Loughlin’s nuanced sense of a “local theology” of early Christianity in the region.²⁶

Early Christian monastic communities shaped the literary culture in which *Immram Brain* was composed, at the intersection of bodily ascetic and biblical concerns with the physical environment of Europe’s Atlantic archipelago and its native oral traditions. This was true for the development of the Otherworld trope as a whole in Celtic-language cultures that formed the core of later nations and sub-nations of Ireland, Wales, Scotland, and the continental enclave of Brittany.²⁷ These cultures all meshed with larger webs of literary and oral influence in the early medieval era, through Latin texts and by ascetic networks modeled on desert monasticism of the Eastern Mediterranean.²⁸ Adomnán’s late-eighth-century Hiberno-Latin *Vita S. Columbae*, for example, refers to a spiritual pilgrim wishing to find a *desertum* in the ocean off Scotland. As Wooding notes, “Historical evidence suggests that there was a basic reality to the ideal of the desert in early Irish monastic settlement, as a space unsullied by secular life.”²⁹

But there was more to this milieu than just a desire for separation from urbanity, as the emergence of Antony’s Egyptian “city in the desert” and the proto-towns around early medieval monasteries in non-urbanized Ireland both suggest. It advanced positively what we would call today a worldview engaging the physical environment. Earlier Christian perspectives on nature in the Irish Sea province, the formative context of the Otherworld trope, did not involve so definite a distinction between what we would call the natural and the supernatural as in late medieval Europe. Two important early Irish writers, Augustinus Hibernicus and Eriugena, to whom we’ll return later, both called miracles natural (in this following Augustine of Hippo, although the latter’s views on grace, the Godhead, and semiotics contributed to later binarizing of those categories).³⁰ In fact, the linguistic distinction of a supernatural category of life as opposed to the natural only emerged sharply in what is now Western Europe with the flourishing of Scholasticism, shaping “a particular mental geography in which events could be assigned to particular domains, this natural, that supernatural.”³¹ Earlier philosophy was related to an asceticism considered empirical, paradoxically with a stronger distinction between the hidden mystery of God and the apparent physical world, but not between the workings of that divine mystery in Creation and physical nature.

The external image of the desert—adapted to the Atlantic islands—served as focus for early Irish Sea literary culture, rather than the later interiorized Gothic

cathedral and monastic cloister. Athanasius' influential fourth-century *Life of St. Antony* portrayed the prototypical desert experience, including an emphasis on the synergy of grace and works in asceticism. John Cassian's writings exemplified (and helped transmit to the West) a meld of Eastern Mediterranean asceticism and theological emphases that opposed (especially in Cassian's Thirteenth Conference) the Augustinian separation of nature and grace that later came to prevail in the West.³² The influence of desert asceticism was especially pronounced in areas around the Irish Sea, where extensive vernacular literatures apparently developed earliest in northwestern Europe. The region enjoyed continued contact with the Eastern Mediterranean beyond the fall of the Western Roman Empire, as Ireland became an economic and cultural powerhouse in the so-called Dark Ages of Atlantic Europe.³³

Indeed, the location of Irish Sea lands on the periphery of continental Europe was then a cultural advantage, both in terms of relative isolation from larger-scale upheavals on the continent, and access to trade routes by sea. Ireland seems to have been Christianized from western Britain, which exhibited, especially in north Wales, claims to cultural continuity from the old Roman province that were uniquely enduring in the lands of the old Western Empire.³⁴ Anglocentric historiography going back to the scholar (and learned propagandist) Bede suggested that monastic cultures in this region were cut off from developments in the Western church. Yet they actually were cosmopolitan in their formative orientation to native, Latin, and Eastern Mediterranean traditions. The cultural combination of insular identity and connectivity parallels aspects of the doubled landscape of the Otherworld itself, as well as of the trope's geographical doppelgänger, archipelago.

Formative geographic and social developments on the archipelago in this era shaped the background to the decentralized Otherworld trope. But, paradoxically, cosmopolitan development of monasticism and churches around the Irish Sea also took a rural and decentralized turn, cut off from the old metropolitan center of the archipelago by the fall of the Roman province in Britain. The continental core of Western Europe by contrast saw greater ecclesiastical focus on redeveloping old Roman urban centers. A synthesis of native and Christian social systems shaped what historian T.M. Charles-Edwards calls competing "multiplicity of hierarchies of status" in early medieval Ireland, which was the most prosperous and well-attested of the early literary cultures around the Irish Sea.³⁵ There was no discrete political system distinct from these social networks. At any given time there could be scores of leaders bearing royal titles, in a patchwork of realms ranging from localized clans to regional dynasties with island-wide ambitions. A "mandarin class" or scholarly elite bridged powerful clan families and monastic communities.³⁶ The latter included clusters of lay families in their outlying grounds, and balanced geographically and genealogically between local and regional secular social networks. Famously, the sixth-century Irish St. Columba (Colum Cille) was a member of one of the powerful Uí Néill dynasties of northern Ireland and wielded influence on royal networks in both Ireland and Scotland while presiding over Iona and its network of monasteries straddling the Irish Sea.

Historian Donnchaid Ó Corráin helpfully surveys the decentralized yet complexly interwoven social and natural landscapes mirrored in the Otherworld trope:

In Ireland of the eighth and ninth centuries and before, there were expanses of upland wood, and great bogs covered large areas of the country. The woodlands were not stable: they advanced and retreated in response to human activity, prehistoric and historic. Most woods were privately owned, managed for large timbers, and coppiced and pollarded for small ones [and used for] pannage and rough grazing for animals, wild fruit and nuts for human consumption. The bogs were used for peat and summer pasture. Literary and legal sources convey the impression that large woods were scarce... Great clearances had taken place in the fourth, fifth, and sixth centuries, and a growing population led to extensive colonization and a remarkable extension of arable farming in the very early medieval period... Ecclesiastical foundations and monastic towns of varying sizes dotted the countryside. Some were tiny, in remote and barren parts of the country, on islands and headlands, while others were small churches in settled farming areas, each with its lands and circular enclosure, and little different in outward appearance from secular settlements. In the rich lowlands and river-valleys there were large monastic towns such as Trim and Lismore, while other houses, great and small, occupied the fertile islands of the central bogland. The settlements of farmers were scattered thickly where land was at all suitable for cow or plough. In one area of Cavan, for example, there is evidence for an early Irish farming settlement for every hundred hectares; in other areas, settlement was twice or three times as dense. The remains of some 40,000 ringforts, roughly contemporary with one another, still dot the landscape, and archaeologists are agreed that the vast bulk of them are the farm enclosures of the well-to-do of early medieval Ireland... the total may have been 50,000 or more.³⁷

The remains of so many farmsteads from a population probably averaging under five hundred thousand in this period highlights its decentralized social landscape. Appropriately for an archipelago that by geographic definition is both in and out of place in relation to land and sea, monastic sites in this topography themselves tended to be in places that were both geographically liminal and socially linked to varied clan networks. Ascetic traditions of exile-journey coexisted with an emphasis on “being in place” in both Irish and Welsh monastic texts. Families living in monastic proto-towns, clan connections of monastic leaders, and the spiritual families of the monasteries themselves formed kinship networks that melded sacred and secular in the inclusive but still alternative worlds of monastic centers. Geographic space overlapped in a deep way with personal landscape of place. Just as the sea served simultaneously both as connector and divider, so too the culture’s imaginative sense of place was dynamic (however much social roles may not have been), contrary to modern conceptions of place as fixed and of a knowable infinite space as dynamic.³⁸ Multiple social overlay networks of kinship, semi-communal farming neighborhoods, clientage, small kingship, and large dynastic alliances of power and obligations were deeply entwined with the monastic and ecclesiastical. In contrast, the evolution of distinctly articulated and centralized ecclesiastical and political systems

in Christian Anglo-Saxon and later Frankish kingdoms involved power articulated in more colonial terms. In early medieval Ireland, some 4,000 churches are attested or evidenced by remains dispersed across the island. That's perhaps 1 church per 120 persons.³⁹ Most probably were unable to accommodate such a crowd. But all were interwoven in the landscape's competing hierarchies, in and between which monastic communities were the literary centers and cultural brokers that ultimately produced the Otherworld trope as an overlay landscape of their own.

The Desert in the Archipelago

Older forms of monasticism endured and evolved in the Irish Sea province to become a foundational influence on the Otherworld as a literary trope. Hudson notes that these communities involved organizational and ascetic emphases that, by the era of the Norman Conquest and the beginning of the Crusades, "were, in some respects, relics of an age long past for most of Western Christendom."⁴⁰ New centralizing native dynasties and conquerors in western Britain and Ireland by the eleventh and twelfth centuries treated them as outmoded, portraying older native communities as lax, secularized, irregular, and disorganized by contrast with, say, Cluny and the Cistercians. The rising kingdom of Scotland, for example, purposely supplanted older Irish monastic influences as part of its political program. Native traditions did not serve the interests of the new political and ecclesiastical masters of an expansive Western Europe as well as those of burgeoning newer monastic franchises. (The hybrid Gallo-Frankish church in the Merovingian era had relied more heavily on Irish monasticism, by contrast.)⁴¹

The foundational importance of the image of the desert or its equivalent in natural landscape (attested by Irish places with "desert" names, and the strikingly remote physical beauty of many Irish Sea monastic sites) was a key difference. In the *Life of St. Antony*, St. Athanasius described Antony's response to the desert or wilderness, which was paradigmatic for early Irish Sea monasticism. Told by a heavenly voice to go to the inner mountain in the desert, Antony questioned how he would find his way alone.

And immediately there were shown to him Saracens who were about to travel that route... they eagerly welcomed him. After journeying three days and three nights in their company, he came to a very high hill. Below the hill there was water—perfectly clear, sweet, and quite cold, and beyond there were plains, and a few untended date palms. Then Antony, as if stirred by God, fell in love with the place, for this was the place the one who had spoken with him at the riverbank had designated... Even the Saracens themselves, perceiving the zeal of Antony, would make it a point to travel that way and would joyfully bring loaves to him... At first, however, when the beasts in the wilderness came for water, they often would damage his crop and his planting. But gently capturing one of the beasts, he said to all of them, "Why do you hurt me, when I do you no injury? Leave, and in the name of the Lord do not come near here any longer" ... and thereafter many [people seeking wisdom and healing] visited him.⁴²

Antony reportedly called the atmosphere of this “wilderness” refuge as essential to an ascetic as the sea for fish: “Just as fish perish when they lie exposed for a while on the dry land. . . . we must rush back to the mountain [in the desert], like fish to the sea—so that we might not, by remaining among you, forget the things within us.”⁴³ So the remembering of the things within depends on being in the desert mountain. In early Irish poetry, some extant verses express a similar ascetic delight in a connective natural environment, such as this one:

Domfarcai fidbaidæ fál,
fomchain loid luin—lúad nadcél—,
hūas mo lebrān ind línech
fomchain trírech inna n-én.
Fommchain cói menn—medair mass—
hí mh-brot glass de dindgnaib doss.
dēbrad, nomchoimmdiu cóima,
caínscribaimm fo roída r[oss].⁴⁴

[A hedge of trees surrounds me, a blackbird's lay sings to me,
praise I shall not conceal.

Above my lined book, a meter of the birds sings to me, lovely chant.

Clear-throated cuckoo sings to me in blue-grey-green cloak from fastness of bushes.

The Lord cherishes me; well do I write under the greenwood.]⁴⁵

Early “Celtic nature poetry” has been reread by recent scholarship with more nuancing than earlier romantic interpretations, in ways further suggestive of a distinctive literary geography of desire.⁴⁶ In these early texts scholars now see delight in nature as often not articulated simply, but with terror at the chaos of nature mixed with awe at the transcendent divine, alongside experience of both an immanence of the divine and an intimate sense of place in landscape.⁴⁷ The “distance-yet-engagement” of nature in such poetry reflected the embodying of a mystery in the intermingling and elemental dynamics of the archipelagic world, no matter how much Irish exegetes nonetheless focused on finding natural explanations for discrete phenomena. Apophatic theology, asceticism, and iconography conjoined with region and with native traditions to shape a sense of the ultimate essence of the real being of the world as unreachable and unpossessable—but empirically engageable through energies of life and divine grace melded synergetically with the world like fog and rain and sea and wind in the Gulf Stream environment. A resulting geography of desire, by which is meant sustained desire for relation with the Irish Sea environment embodied in narratives of topography and Creation as a whole, involved a definition of desire embodying cosmically connected creativity rather than that of transcendent lack and possessiveness typical in the later West.

Another textual example of this complex relation of asceticism to the environment is found in an early medieval Irish prayer attributed to St. Patrick. It invokes both connections to elements of the physical world and to Christ who is contextualized in bodily relations constituting place, interweaving personal place and a sense of the grace of divine energies moving in nature.

Atomriug indiu
 niurt nime
 soilse gréne
 étrochtae éscái
 áni thened
 déne lóchet
 luaithi gáithe
 fudomnai mara
 tairismigi thalman
 cobsaidi ailech . . .
 Críst limm, Críst reum Críst im degaid
 Críst indium Críst ísum Críst uasum
 Críst desum Críst tuathum
 Críst i llius Críst i sius, Críst i n-erus
 Críst i cridiu cech duini immumrorda,
 Críst i ngin cech oín rodóm-labrathar
 Críst i cech rusc nodóm-dercathar
 Críst i cech cluais rodóm-chloathar . . .
 [I arise today:
 in Heaven's strength,
 in Sun's shining,
 in Moon's glow,
 in Fire's sparkling,
 in Lightning's speed,
 in Wind's quickness,
 in Sea's profundity,
 in Earth's steadfastness,
 in Rock's firmness . . .
 Christ with me, Christ before me, Christ behind me;
 Christ within me, Christ beneath me, Christ above me;
 Christ to my right, Christ to my left;
 Christ in my lying down, Christ in my sitting, Christ in my rising;
 Christ in the heart of each person who thinks of me,
 Christ in the mouth of each one who speaks to me,
 Christ in each eye that sees me,
 Christ in each ear that hears me . . .]⁴⁸

After uttering this “breastplate” prayer of protection, Patrick with his companions then purportedly assumed the form of deer to pursuing forces of the high king, who passed them, leaving the saint’s party unseen and unharmed.⁴⁹

In the emerging new Europe of the continentally based “Twelfth Century Renaissance,” followed by the Scholasticism of the thirteenth century, this physically relational world of the desert shrunk symbolically into the cloister. In the late eleventh century, Bernard of Clairvaux kicked off the new era. While in prayer, he famously passed by Lake Geneva without noticing the lake. It was an environmental watershed in Western culture.⁵⁰ Even later Franciscan spirituality, famous for its celebration of the natural world, tended to offer a more inwardly oriented interaction with nature than early medieval texts, typically emphasizing intimate relations with small animals rather than larger creatures

and landscapes, as in Celtic and desert hagiography.⁵¹ Changing notions of space affected views of sexual difference as well, amid urbanization. A “broad womanless space” became imagined as part of an increasingly abstract view of the physical world, without the sense of place that Irigaray describes as embodying also experience of sexual difference, or the early Irish Sea Otherworld.⁵² The shift to a paradigm of male interiority also affected linguistic theory, which changed from assumptions that words iconographically flow into the signified, to later medieval theories emphasizing how humans instrumentally form words to signify objects.⁵³ This evoked a different consciousness of temporality as well as of space and symbol. By the twelfth century, Latin writers increasingly distinguished their own “modernity” from ancient times.

Historian Caitlin Corning describes six distinctive regional aspects of early medieval Christian communities in Ireland, reflecting not a static “Celtic church” but a dynamic and heterogeneous regional culture, which helped to shape the Otherworld’s literary milieu. They were⁵⁴: (1) The role of “powerful abbots, who unlike their contemporaries on the Continent, controlled large networks of churches and regularly attended church synods” accompanied by influential scholars and anchorites. (Such a conciliar model of ecclesiology likewise is suggested, though not proven, by very limited evidence from the early Welsh church, and Bede’s account of British-Celtic bishops seeking counsel from a hermit.⁵⁵) (2) An emphasis on going into exile for God, some evidence for which is also reflected in early Welsh hagiography. (3) An early focus on regular personal confession (in the context of an ongoing relation to a spiritual guide), traceable in part to evidence of post-Roman British penitentials (e.g., that of the Cambro-Latin Gildas), as well as to a Cassianic-style monastic heritage. (4) A rural and decentralized orientation.⁵⁶ (5) Regular use of nonclerics to manage day-to-day church and monastery operations, reflecting mixed lay-clerical populations and indigenous inculturation of monasticism. (6) An emphasis on Antiochene or detailed historical scriptural exegesis.⁵⁷ The latter explicated scripture and the natural world in physically literal symbolism. It also helped shape a multiplicitous and enumerative writing style, based partly on biblical models linking mystery and physicality in cultural narrative, echoed in both Irish and Welsh texts. This style, while not exclusive, contributed to an emphasis on physical nature in early Irish exegesis and poetry. It relates to how the early Irish adapted biblical themes into a type of “Irish Old Testament,” paralleled also as we shall see in Welsh in the *Mabinogi*. The literary Otherworld largely formed one result of that project.

There is also an additional political category of difference that this study adds to Corning’s list, of importance to the Otherworld trope. The early Irish church did not embrace any native Celtic version of the German *comitatus*, or war band, to the extent that ecclesiastical cultures in other Western European countries did from the Carolingian era on. There was not an experience of the Church passing in effect into the hands of an elite identifying itself as a conquering racial group suppressing a native population, as in Frankish, Anglo-Saxon, and Anglo-Norman realms. In a foundational Irish Sea text c. 500, the Cambro-Latin *De Excidio Britanniae*, St. Gildas railed against native Welsh warlords. Irish Christian writers, who in some ways adapted native traditions more effectively than other

cultures, in this case preferred to condemn the native institution of the wandering *fian* band, as Charles-Edwards notes, “not just for its violence, but also for its explicit paganism,” although it was Christianized in elegy in later tales of Finn.⁵⁸ For monastic cultural brokers in the early medieval Irish Sea zone, over-privileging warrior culture in texts could be a threat to the decentralized system that they sought to mediate, however entwined they themselves were with secular elites. The satire of warrior ethics in the central early Irish narratives of the *Táin Bó Cúailnge* illustrates this, as do monastic-brokered restrictions on warfare such as the *Cáin Adomnáin*. Perhaps the Otherworld trope originated in literary form in part as an attempt to erase and then Christianize the hypermasculine institution of the war band in a new narrative of landscape, without assimilating and accommodating that institution within the church. This occurred in literary cultures emphasizing a “native” identity that had not experienced to the same extent post-Roman migration and disruption, amid communities with experiential ascetic norms (and perhaps enduring matrifocal aspects of native patriarchy), by contrast with Germanic cultures organized around migratory ethics and hypermasculine Odinic war cults. Early Welsh literature, such as the *Mabinogi* (discussed in the next chapter) and so-called saga poetry, also strongly seemed to bring into question warrior ethics perhaps identified with conquering Anglo-Saxon and Anglo-Norman regimes.

Early monastic communities from the Irish Sea realms wrote from these contexts the distinctively non-Augustinian geography of desire already mentioned. That narrative geography interwove nature and grace—self, landscape, and the divine—in techniques of asceticism, literature, and visual art. This is evident in how early monastics there incorporated the sea as a productive dimension of otherworldly space (whether as a portal for exile or as a place to stand in prayer), together with outdoor-oriented processions and ascetic practices, agricultural and pastoral work, and the spatiality of their texts and manuscript production, such as the Book of Kells, which were all creative of an intensely cosmically interactive type of cultural geography (the environmental intertextuality of the manuscripts to be examined in future chapters).⁵⁹ In this they followed the so-called energy theory of desert asceticism, the likely influence of which on the Otherworld trope is explored further in chapter three.⁶⁰ That combined theological-cosmological theory was implicit in psychosomatic techniques promoted by Cassian in his *Conferences*, practices that in the East became known as hesychasm,⁶¹ graphically evident in the early Irish martyrdom colors. Chapter four will argue that those color-practices combined apophatic belief in the unknowability of the essence of God with a focus on the activities or energies of God experienced both in the body and in the Irish Sea environment.

Such synergy of ascetic struggle melded grace (the energies) with free will in *theosis* or deification to shape this distinctive ascetic landscape. The believer-struggler in *ascesis* (bodily spiritual exercise) potentially could engage with the uncreated divine energies and become one with them, ultimately as “a god” in Pauline terms. The energies are manifest in a complex integration of the external world and internal memory. They manifest what one religious scholar called a “sparkle in creation” transfiguring nature.⁶² Early Irish rules on monasticism

in fact used a term *óibelteóir* for a contemplative hermit or anchorite, in-place in Insular “desert” exile, which meant “spark of the contemplative life.”⁶³ Such hermits and spiritual guides, usually out of the limelight of history, held a special place in early Christian traditions of western Britain and Ireland, reflected in early Irish law.⁶⁴ Bede and Gerald of Wales described their continuing distinctive role in Celtic-speaking lands, and their practice is reflected in the Irish colors of nonviolent martyrdom.⁶⁵ Nor was the cultural geography of such “desert” asceticism confined to eremitic monasticism. Traditions identify cave-refuges with communal monasteries at Glendalough in Ireland and Whithorn in Scotland.

Early saints’ lives, chronicles, texts of monastic rules, poetry, and exegesis help outline this distinctive cultural geography around the Irish Sea,⁶⁶ but personal experiences of it in many ways seem lost. A surviving regional culture of desert asceticism on the island-like peninsula of Mount Athos in Greece provides a potential analogue, however. The modern British monastic elder Sophrony (Sakharov) famously described the intersection of different layers of time, memory, and extra-temporality on the Aegean peninsula’s rocky landscape in the life there of his own elder (now recognized as a saint) Silouan (1866–1938), with whom he lived in the 1930s. “He finds his *deep* heart,” Sophrony wrote of Silouan’s long periods of prayer alone or in a small community there, “reaches the profound spiritual, metaphysical core of his being; and looking into it sees that the existence of mankind is not something alien and extraneous to him but is inextricably bound up with his own being.” That empathy, extended from his coastal hermitage to the world at large, echoed St. Columba’s purported description of seeing the cosmos in a single ray of sun.⁶⁷ Sophrony wrote of Silouan:

His prayer reached out beyond the bounds of time, and all thought of the transitory phenomena of human life, of enemies, vanished . . . The breathing changes and becomes constrained, or, to use a better term, secret . . . The mind, the heart, the body to its very bones are all contracted into this one point. The mind, divested of all images, contemplates the world; the heart immaterially lives the sufferings of the world, and in the heart itself suffering reaches its utmost limit. The heart—or rather, the whole being—is overwhelmed by weeping, is engulfed in tears . . . the mind in an act of intuitive synthesis being aware of everything simultaneously. Meanwhile the soul hovers on that brink where one may at any moment lose all sense of the world and of the body . . .⁶⁸

In Elder Zosima in *The Brothers Karamazov*, Fyodor Dostoevsky presented traditions of desert asceticism adapted to Russian forests as a kind of cosmic participation (paradoxically linked to losing the world in the Heideggerian sense of habitual or instrumental human reality).⁶⁹ This explained why when Dostoevsky’s characters “begin to save themselves,” they “kiss the earth and ‘water it with their tears.’”⁷⁰ Patristic writers earlier described more precisely the engaging liminality between worlds noted by Sophrony and Dostoevsky, with the sense of the “brink” described in Silouan’s practice echoing an early Irish description of St. Brigit as perched like a bird on a cliff between this world and another.⁷¹

The “prayer beyond the bounds of time” as framework for the desert-in-the-archipelago involved experiencing (empirically, it was claimed) a fourfold

overlay landscape of time-space, from which arises the frame for the Otherworld trope. Paralleling Heidegger's fourfold paradigm of place as event (to be explored in the next chapter in relation to specific early Irish Sea texts), this ascetic landscape involved overlapping temporal, extra-temporal, and nontemporal modes of life, overlaying the same physical geography.⁷² These included: (1) human time of social norms, (2) natural time of the nonhuman physical world especially emphasized in early medieval Celtic narratives,⁷³ (3) eternity in the hidden spiritual world, and (4) the everlasting unknown of divine energies flowing through both the hidden and the apparent world. Interpreting Silouan's experience as described by his apprentice Sophrony, the theological scholar Georgios I. Mantzaridis writes: "So it is that eternity exists within time, while at the same time enveloping it and creating a new reality where temporal dimensions are transcended and the fullness of the life in Christ is made manifest."⁷⁴ This double-folded experience of landscape, distinct from Scholastic and modern approaches to understanding nature, helped to shape a dynamic, quasi-ecological sense of region that resisted delusions of being able to possess the world, while blurring boundaries between human and nonhuman, body and idea.

The greatest articulation of this empirical theology emanating from the Irish Sea zone came in Eriugena's ninth-century biblical exegesis, written in Charles the Bald's Francia but drawing on experience of Irish monasticism and ideas from Greek patristic texts that he adapted to Latin discourse. His *Periphyseon* described an analogous emanation of power in place through what he called secret folds of nature that were also theophanies. Those were in effect the energies of God, or, as Eriugena called them in creatively adapting Augustinian cosmological vocabulary (following his Irish predecessor Augustinus Hibernicus), the primordial causes and their effects in theophanies.⁷⁵ In Eriugena's synthesis, the divine essence is always a mystery. But God is experienced in theophanies or emanations always running through the physical Creation, both transfigurative of and interactive with human imagination and the world, simultaneously transcendent and immanent. In this hyper-dimension of environment-as-process, figured as an alternate mode of nontemporality touching earth but energized by the divine, we find philosophical and ascetic analogues to the Otherworld. Together with native traditions⁷⁶ and old gods lingering in stories, these Christian contexts helped shape a literary landscape in-between subject and object, in ongoing empathetic if sometimes dangerous engagement with spiritual forces melding in Creation.

The embodied desert practice and theology behind the trope highlighted this radical engagement of nonbeing with the known cosmos, articulated by Eriugena. Its *apophysis*, or "knowledge of something by what is unlike, or even contrary" in articulating nature, emphasized the emptying of God and the human itself into nature through *kenosis*, so that divine creativity lived through self-emptied creature.⁷⁷ In this privileging of a hidden but entwined nonbeing as Other, nature could not be objectified in knowledge. If Augustine emphasized the association of nonbeing (as that which does not exist) with evil, Eriugena stressed the inclusion of nonbeing in nature.⁷⁸ Both Greek patristics and desert asceticism emphasized nonbeing as natural as well. This alternative Christian

view figured evil as a lack of self-realization or “missing of the mark” in which the Fall was “ancestral sin,” not the transmitted blame of Augustinian “Original Sin,” but the shared challenge of a world objectified by demonic forces through past human choices.⁷⁹ Translating the non-Augustinian view into modern cinematic terms, the Fall effected *The Matrix*. Further, the psychoanalytic theorist Julia Kristeva posits behind these distinctions an emphasis in non-Augustinian theology shaping a spiritually erotic view of the cosmos: God desiring humanity and Creation and vice versa.⁸⁰

A de-centered eroticism extending to Creation as a whole in desert asceticism stemmed from articulating in theology and practice a sense of the Trinity expressing a dynamic and mysterious engagement between energies of reality, symbolism, and phenomena. In the Nicene-Constantinopolitan creed developed in the fourth century, the Holy Spirit proceeded from the Father, even as the Son is begotten of the Father. Uncreated divine energies in nature emanated from this de-centered divine essence, as in the landscapes of Otherworld cultures. But, drawing on Augustine’s writings, the Latin church later would adopt a formula in which the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father “and the son” (*filioque*) together, a version officially promoted by the Carolingian and Anglo-Saxon churches in the early Middle Ages. The Father and the Son became identified more closely and the focus of divine energies became more centralized in Augustinian notions of grace, which were reimagined as a created force inserted into the world by God and identified with a centralized church. The Holy Spirit, associated with connections in the symbolic realm between the divine and nature, became the instrument of a Father-Son combine. By contrast, in the non-Augustinian formulation, Kristeva writes that the kingdom of God was

defined through germinal, floral, nutritional, and erotic metamorphoses that imply, beyond the cosmic energy theory often viewed as specific to the East, the openly sexual fusion with the Thing at the limits of the nameable...the Spirit merges with the two other centers and, by the same token, endows them, beyond their value as distinct identities or authorities, with an abyssal, breathtaking, and certainly also sexual depth, where the psychological experience of loss and ecstasy finds its place.⁸¹

The Trinitarian difference parallels C.S. Peirce’s later contrast (in an alternative to Saussurian linguistics) between a dyadic objectifying semiotic and a triadic participatory semiotic, the latter forming today an important basis for the emerging field of ecosemiotics.⁸²

Eriugena articulated the earlier triadic Trinitarian formula and emphasis, paralleling his “energy theory” and background in early Irish Sea monasticism. It was reflected also in the original creedal language of the Stowe Missal (the earliest extant Hiberno-Latin texts for church services) and suggested by early Irish writing, while enduring in a more general way in desert ascetic practices of synergy with divine energies and in literary adaptations of the native Otherworld.⁸³ The Holy Spirit was particularly associated with nature, as is suggested in a ninth-century Byzantine ecclesiastical verse, roughly contemporary to the Stowe Missal: “By the Holy Spirit, the streams of grace are flowing, watering all

of the creation, granting life upon it.”⁸⁴ So the Trinitarian shift also reflected and affected cultural views of nature. It marked a marginalizing of nature in relation to individual human cognition in Western European culture. Kristeva notes that the shift toward the *filioque* in the later medieval West (promoted early on by the reforming Archbishop Theodore of Canterbury, then Charlemagne, and later popes at Rome)

had the advantage of providing a basis for the political and spiritual authority of the papacy on the one hand, and on the other for the autonomy and rationality of the believer’s person, identified with a Son having power and prestige equal to that of the Father. What had thus been gained in equality and therefore in performance and historicity had perhaps been lost at the level of the experience of *identification*, in the sense of a permanent instability of identity. Difference and identity, rather than autonomy and equality, did on the contrary build up the Eastern Trinity, which consequently became the source of ecstasy and mysticism.⁸⁵

Difference with identity, a combination of terms used earlier to describe the geographic character of an archipelago, implies a sense of identity as empathy, embracing difference of the Other in identification that shapes self relationally. This links Kristeva’s psychoanalytic and theological discussion to that of environmental phenomenologists working today in neural mind sciences, such as Evan Thompson, whose studies will be explored further in this chapter, and to discussion here of the Otherworld.⁸⁶ The implicit definition of self as empathy in the early Trinitarian paradigm relates to the concept of self-realization in deep ecology by involving again an alternative, relational sense of desire. In the early medieval context, that different sense of desire helps to explain the immanent transcendence of the Otherworld in the landscape and of the landscape in the Otherworld—or landscape *as* interactive Otherworld.

The Trinity being the ultimate model for human psychology and cultural semiotics in early Christian literary cultures, the earlier creedal model also involved a distinctive entwinement of the divine reality and the symbolic environment in culture. The intersubjective realms of the Real (the inarticulable support of symbolic reality in psychoanalytic theory) and the Symbolic (the realm of language) were more closely entwined than psychological norms today would allow.⁸⁷ As Jorge Luis Borges put it, in terms of Scandinavian mythology that also emerged into literacy in this early medieval Christian milieu, “Thor was not the god of thunder, he was the thunder and the god.”⁸⁸ That semiotic entwinement of the categories of Real and Symbolic can be seen in the Book of Kells, and in the Otherworld narratives and their relation to physical topography. As will be discussed further, such patristic “ecossemiotics” literally based the Christian views of nature of Maximus the Confessor and his later acolyte Eriugena, in their cosmic language of the *logoi* of the *Logos* as the energies of God. In such cultural semiotics, the Incarnation became cosmically transformative through *theosis*—relating spiritual, bodily, and environmental realms.

By contrast, adoption of the *filioque* became a symptom of the high-medieval fusion of the Real as the Father with the Son as the Imaginary (a mirror-like image of selfhood). This produced a powerful new model of subjectivity, while

marginalizing the third intersubjective realm of the Symbolic. This shift marked the basis for modern Western individualism in strengthening a sense of the interior reality of human subjectivity, accompanied by a highly problematic ethos of dominance over the physical world. The *filioque* required a concomitant objectification (and separation) of the Symbolic as the Holy Spirit to build up its new subjectivity, amid the instability of identification (empathy) Kristeva notes. Words became less relational realities vis-à-vis the physical world, and more instrumental technologies for human manipulation of that environment, presaging further technologies to come. This accompanied a conceptual objectification of nature, which in effect became constructed as a simulacrum for human cognition to read. It was an important step in the development of modern science that found its aesthetic parallels oddly in the interiorized virtual reality of the Gothic cathedral and Dante's *Commedia*, and a linguistic signifier haunted "by the implicit lack of that which it represents."⁸⁹

The earlier sense of self and desire shaping the Irish Sea cultural contexts of the Otherworld had involved a different sense of body, physicality, and ritual. Patristics scholar Andrew Louth describes how Christian cultures before the twelfth century generally held a sense of the human body as a microcosm and image of the cosmos, rather than the expression of human inwardness that the body became contemporary with the *filioque*'s official adoption in the West.⁹⁰ The earlier perspective again involved no bodily separation of the supernatural and the natural.⁹¹ Earlier, Christian ritual of the Eucharist, centered on the body of Christ, embodied "the ancient sense of the mystery as an action."⁹² Later, by the time of the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215, the Eucharist was labeled as a real and not symbolic transformation, setting up two contrasting categories.⁹³ It was objectified and drawn into binaries of subjective versus objective experience that had not existed earlier to the same degree. A transformative role of the priest became prominent vis-à-vis the epiclesis of the Holy Spirit in the ritual. Early medieval asceticism by contrast resonates with a spatial "practice of place" meaningful to anti-modernist religious scholars today, in which miracle is an experience of the integrity of the world, and mystery an interactive bringing-together of worlds of environment and the human "ritual body."⁹⁴

The cultural paradigm shift of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries marking an end to the old Irish Sea literary region did not occur in a physical vacuum. Culturally implicated environmental change contributed to and reflected the shift. The later Middle Ages saw a rise in meat consumption, especially beef, accompanied by large-scale permanent conversion of woodland to arable land in northern Europe, a break from previous Mediterranean patterns of cyclical land use. The result of the latter change was a rise in alluviation and soil erosion. In addition, expanded Eurasian land clearances paralleled the rise of more centralized large-scale polities in northwestern Europe (as will be explored further in chapter six). Those clearances in turn may have contributed to the warming trend that overlapped and encouraged the "Twelfth Century Renaissance."⁹⁵

Prior to this period, during the development of the Otherworld trope, archaeological and manuscript remains from early medieval Ireland document an intense overlap of social, personal, and spiritual place in regional landscape contexts, one

that embodied itself textually. Subsequent Western culture distinguished sharply between nature as cognitively understood essence and nature as experienced physical environment. But religious scholar Douglas Burton-Christie observes how an early medieval “monasticizing” of landscape, including the overlapping networks mentioned earlier, involved no clear privileging in ascetic *praxis* of “either the unlettered or the philosophically sophisticated,” the “natural” or the cultural in effect. What was essential was “the kind of relationships that existed between them.”⁹⁶ That emphasis extended to inclusion of native traditions in law and literature in early medieval Christian literatures around the Irish Sea, and the hybridizing of them with biblical and classical textuality. Sometimes the results were startling, as in Irish and Latin codicils to the twelfth-century Book of Leinster’s version of the *Táin Bó Cúailnge* at the end of the old milieu:

Bendacht ar cech óen mebraigfes go hindraic Táin amlaid seo ⁊ ná tuillfe cruth aile furri.

Sed ego qui scripsi hanc historiam aut uerius fabulam quibusdam fidem in hac historia aut fabula non accomodo. Quaedam enim ibi sunt praestrigia demonum, quaedam autem figmenta poetica, quaedam similia uero, quaedam non, quaedam ad delectationem stultorum.

[Irish:] A blessing on every one who shall faithfully memorise the *Táin* as it is written here and shall not add any other form to it.

[Latin:] But I who have written this story, or rather this fable, give no credence to the various incidents related in it. For some things in it are the deceptions of demons, others poetic figments; some are probable, others improbable; while still others are intended for the delectation of foolish men.⁹⁷

Otherworld and Geography

The Otherworld trope extended the geography of the Irish Sea province into an archipelago of varied temporalities on land as well as across the sea. This included manmade Neolithic mounds, which originally were old passage chambers and burial and ritual sites. They became portals to the Otherworld in stories such as the early Irish tale *Tochmarc Étaíne*, which will be explicated further in this regard in the next chapter. In such layers of landscape the Otherworld was a kind of wormhole of reimagined memory connecting to earlier dimensions of time. The Irish *Mesca Ulad* (dating in earliest extant form to the twelfth century) describes in fantasy-historical terms in its opening the defeat of the Tuatha Dé Danann, in which the shamanistic poet-leader Amairgen of the Milesians (identified with the Gaels in the medieval understanding of the tradition) divides Ireland in two, the underground given to the resident Tuatha Dé Danann, and the aboveground to the invading sons of Míl. Those peoples coexisted somewhat uneasily in the landscape, the ancients providing the newcomers with wives according to one tradition, while sometimes aiding and sometimes disrupting human society.⁹⁸ Irish and Welsh Otherworld texts also described antediluvian realms, now underwater, associated with an ancestral past also close to nonhuman nature, Paradise, biblical eternity, and everlasting divine energies

(paralleling the ascetic “fourfold” described earlier).⁹⁹ Throughout this fantasy geography, there is a sense of what John Carey (to whose preeminent work on the Otherworld and early Irish cosmology this study stands in debt) describes as existence “beyond the mortal conditions of sequence and duration,”¹⁰⁰ in what another commentator calls a spiritual realm “beneath, within, alongside and beyond the visual landscape.”¹⁰¹

In this the Otherworld had associations with a whole range of geography, topographical and human. Carey notes that use of the Hiberno-Latin *orbis* as a word for the Otherworld suggests that the term “could be applied to the realm of the immortals and the dead, a nether region corresponding to the *síde* [fairy mounds] of vernacular tradition,” evoking “an idea that the supernatural reality revealed by journeys beneath or across earth or water is essentially unitary,” expressing a mythic deep structure of the culture.¹⁰² But Carey defines the Otherworld in early Irish literature generally as “supernatural dwelling-places [of legendary immortal beings] . . . closely associated with the realm of nature . . . reached by going beneath earth or water.”¹⁰³ He also notes, following that description, the association of the Otherworld with art, in terms of music and artifacts of treasure, “the imagination as expressed in narrative.” From this realm, “The spring of poetic inspiration rose . . . flowing forth into Ireland by various channels.”¹⁰⁴ In other connections of the trope to human society, Alaric Hall, in his study of elves and related otherworldly beings in northwestern Europe, describes how such figures generally seem to have functioned as natural though magical beings, reciprocal mirrors of human life setting limits to human behavior.¹⁰⁵ By contrast with Icelandic and Irish texts, these beings tended more often to become demonized in politically and ecclesiastically centralized Anglo-Saxon literary cultures.¹⁰⁶ Explanations of Otherworld denizens as demons in Irish texts, Carey notes, occur relatively later in early Irish literary history, as only one among several vibrant interpretations. Such beings were often conflated with deities portrayed in biblical terms as unfallen or antediluvian human beings.

The backdrop for these beings lay in sea, sky, lakes, coastline, clouds, and mixed interior lowlands and highlands, which then as now ran together and separated continuously amid the dynamic weather patterns of the Gulf Stream, undoubtedly contributing to the shaping of such cultural geography.¹⁰⁷ Travelers today often impressionistically experience that elemental fluidity when viewing early “Celtic” monastic sites where the sky meets the sea, at places such as Iona, Skellig Michael off Kerry, or St. Ninian’s Cave on the Galloway coast. The medievalist Jeffrey Jerome Cohen brilliantly advances an archipelagic paradigm of simultaneous identity and difference involving culture and ethnicity in texts from the northwestern European isles.¹⁰⁸ An essay by Deleuze that Cohen draws upon, “Desert Islands,” evokes in its title early Insular monasticism and its roots in the ethos of the desert fathers.¹⁰⁹ Islands for Deleuze are a continual reminder of elements in flux in the world, a “double movement” of earth and sea, of separation and creation (much like shifting sands and horizons in the desert), which humans want to forget because of the unsettling ramifications for any discrete sense of identity.

This archipelagic sense of bridging elements experientially is conveyed by Gearóid Ó Donnchadha’s description of an Atlantic storm off Ireland, in

the prefatory note to his translation of medieval accounts of St. Brendan's sea travels:

What I can best liken it to is to being among the Himalayas except that the mountains are moving, not regularly, but criss-crossing one another in tumultuous frenzy, running one across the breaking, white-foamed tops of others . . . One lives in a virtual white-out, stung and blinded by spray . . . the auditory cacophonous assault that limits the ability to think . . . Finally, the harassment and brutalization of one's senses enters into one's very consciousness so as to create a virtual out-of-body experience where one is bereft of all but the experience of the moment. Relatives, friends, familiar land places are no more. They are stripped from your consciousness. There is only you and the forces of nature. You have been stripped of civilization, of culture; you are left with the most primal instinct of survival. In this state you are one with the first human beings that tried to make sense of a new existence into which they had been thrust.¹¹⁰

It was in this physical environment that monastics on islands such as Iona engaged in ascetic practices that included standing in natural bodies of water while praying for extended periods. Lay people perhaps too embraced ascetic-penitential "martyrdom" described by the color term *glas*, which also named the wind from the otherworldly southwestern direction of the sea, a grey-blue-green "color of sky in water."¹¹¹ In perhaps the greatest Hiberno-Latin hagiographical text, Adomnán's *Vita Columbae*, Columba exercises physical perception and spiritual guidance across dimensions of earthly space, and converses with angels and apostles, all while, according to the earlier Irish poem *Amra Coluim Cille*, working as an ascetic scholar (and scion of a regional Irish royal family) who studies and practices ways of Eastern Mediterranean monastics in exile for God, on an island off the ruggedly beautiful coasts of Scotland and Ireland that frame the hagiography.¹¹² The Otherworld of the Ulster and Irish Mythological Cycles of stories overlaid the Irish landscape just as the biblical Paradise was envisioned as somehow atop the earth in Hiberno-Latin cosmological writing, amid the lower aerial waters of the cosmos that melded with the sea. Regions in Irish culture were associated with symbolic compass directions and color codes linking the winds and ascetic practices, as explored in chapter four. In Wales, a spatial scheme linked the four gospels with geographical areas and stories of the land, as will be discussed in the next chapter. Holy places of saints such as Brigit's Kildare added to these distinctively multilayered and metatextual post-Roman cultural landscapes.

Recent "Irish Sea studies," crystallized in Benjamin Hudson's collection of that title, articulate "the Irish Sea as a region with distinctive and unifying features."¹¹³ Hudson's work in particular helps us to picture its complex and dynamic histories in relation to geography, after the formative era of the Otherworld trope but during the flourishing of extant texts that carried it forth ultimately into modern literature. In that period, from 900 to 1200 CE, the lagoon-like but often physically turbulent central sea became the focus of vibrant trade, not only between surrounding islands, but on an axis between Iceland and Spain, as it earlier had been to Mediterranean trade. Ireland was in many ways the hub of wealth when for a time the sea became a "Scandinavian lake." The vibrant hybridity of early

medieval Christianity and Norse paganism, seen in the slightly later flowering of Icelandic literature, also from a peripheral archipelagic position, shows partial analogues with literature of the Celtic realms: an emphasis on landscape, externally realized self, and otherworldly elements.¹¹⁴ But during the latter part of Hudson's period of study, changes in economy and culture and the emergence of the new West marginalized this Celtic-Scandinavian Irish Sea zone. While Hudson notes how the tenth and eleventh centuries saw the rise of proto-urban centers there, accompanying increased mercantilism, by the end of the eleventh century the region had begun to be more a source of raw materials for Western Europe than of manufactured goods as in the past.¹¹⁵ A new continental-based perspective defined the area's crafts as somewhat old-fashioned—along with its monasticism and more decentralized organization of land.¹¹⁶

Yet the combination of distinctive literary culture and dynamically relational geography that helped shape the Otherworld trope arguably preserved it as a form of cultural resistance to the rising hegemony of a new Western European grid of dominating space. The interiors of the sea region, including the “bewilderingly irregular” midlands in Ireland and Wales' fractal valleys and divided coastlands, lacked a central fertile river basin to provide a nucleus for proto-national consciousness. They instead provided the geopolitical analogy to the literary Otherworld trope of the estimated eighty-some stories of the Ulster Cycle, and other related Irish tales as well as the Welsh *Mabinogi* cycle.¹¹⁷ In the Irish landscape, central grazing areas and “sacred zones” or belts of monasteries marked shifting spheres of influence among paramount dynasties. As social historian Nerys Patterson notes, “The linch-pin of the political economy was therefore the control of wilderness,” the latter itself forming an analogue perhaps to the Otherworld.¹¹⁸ Each of the four quarters of the legendary pentarchy of ancient Irish kingdoms was geographically based on an upland massif, whose hill fringes were the basis for early farming that seems to have expanded more to the interior with new ploughs and crops at the time of the spread of Christianity. An increasing squeeze on borderland “sacred zones” that housed monasteries during the Early Middle Ages brought increasing pressure on liminal lands and transhumant grazing resources associated with them. There was a certain distinctive combination in this Irish landscape of rootlessness and intense localization, noted by geographer J.H. Andrews, reflecting indefinite boundaries in sea, loughs, land, and sky.¹¹⁹ To some extent this was arguably the case across the Irish Sea in Wales as well, amid displacement of native Celtic British culture to western highlands and valleys near the Irish Sea.

By contrast, in the Anglo-Saxon cultural zone a more continental geographic orientation emerged, with more hegemonic (and ultimately homogeneous) ecclesiological and political contexts as a result. Despite some similar influences from desert monasticism, such orientation and contexts shaped an alternate and “newer” cultural landscape, explored further in chapter six.¹²⁰ As Jennifer Neville notes, “For the Old English poet, the representation of the natural world helps to create the context of helplessness and alienation that motivates the seeking of God. For the Irish poet, the representation of the natural world creates the context of wonder and joy that surrounds the seeking of God.”¹²¹

As Western European culture emerged with a continental orientation, the archipelagic focus of the Irish Sea world was repositioned as peripheral by the self-described mainstream of Frankish and Anglo-Saxon cultures. Yet if the Otherworld trope developed there amid O'Loughlin's early "local theology" of Christianity,¹²² the trope's survival beyond that immediate context suggests also its cosmopolitan roots and quasi-environmental relevance of a broader nature. Its influences on Middle English literature and what the critic Northrop Frye termed the "green world" of Elizabethan English textuality, and even on twentieth-century fantasy, suggest what Frye would have termed archetypal aspects of human experience engaged by the trope.¹²³ Even so, with drastic man-made changes to Europe's Atlantic archipelago and other global ecosystems, a more hegemonic and global virtual reality threatens the survival of this enduring trope today. It arguably now faces erasure more certain than that of the Norman conquests in the then-new Western Europe (never completely controlling of memory, text, and landscape)—by both modern appropriation of and disdain for ancient cultural difference in our "disenchanted" globalizing world, amid which early medieval Irish Sea cultures seem to be one of Arnold Toynbee's lost world civilizations.¹²⁴ Even contemporary fantasy fiction arguably now moves in directions more and more toward a virtual reality of multiple worlds and instrumental nonhuman being, disconnected from earth in cyberspace evermore distant from geography.¹²⁵

The Otherworld and Philosophy

The impending extinction of this imaginary realm as a sense of landscape is ironic, given how the trope in effect puts a relational "face" on nature, evoking human ethical responsibility for landscape relevant to current discussions in environmental philosophy. The phenomenologist Emmanuel Lévinas in response to the brutalities of the mid-twentieth century developed an "ethic of alterity," which argued for a numinous image of "the face" of a speaking human being as the necessary focus for evoking moral responsibility from another human, in recognition of the other as a speaking and living being rather than an object.¹²⁶ In this, Lévinas anticipated somewhat the emphasis on empathy today in efforts to connect environmental philosophy with neuroscience, notably in the work of philosopher Evan Thompson. Thompson, engaging in what he calls neurophenomenology, in fact uses biological and brain-research narratives to extend Lévinas' sense of the face to the nonhuman, a project also of animal studies. This extension involves changing notions of "comprehending of the other" to "experiencing the other," and going beyond definitions of the other as a speaking subject in the conventional modern sense of language, to an ecosemiotic sense of subject incorporating the nonhuman. Thompson argues that the ecosystem or ecological region, not the organism, is the basic unit of evolution, an idea with resonance in Eriugena's theophanic anthropology, which defines the human by its participation in a larger context of nature. Thompson cites brain studies that suggest how having a receptive "precognitive" perception of environment in mind (such as an environmentally engaging narrative of landscape)

can contribute to richer mental experience of and neural development in physical encounters with the earth and other beings. Following research on neuron mirrors, Thompson and others see mental development as environmentally experiential rather than discretely and individually cognitive.¹²⁷

The Otherworld and inhabitants of its intra-cosmic dimension, in hollow hills and misty waters of the Irish Sea zone, in this sense put a face on nature, having extended in effect Lévinas' ethic of alterity to nonhuman beings, nonbeing, and landscape, long before modern environmental philosophy. This shaping of a face for place as a dynamic landscape (in line with ecology), rather than an object (as on a GPS matrix), connects the psychological landscape of the Otherworld with visual Christian iconography of the early medieval era and the Maximian-Eriugenian cosmic semiotic of *logoi*. In these, image is experienced as relation, a connection that Eriugena emphasized in describing interactive fantasy-theophanies as the dynamic of nature itself.¹²⁸ In early Irish Sea otherworldly narratives, place is a nexus of connective energies—divine, human, and what might be called environmental—with ethical meaning. In the Irish story *Tochmarc Étaíne*, the otherworldly mounds in the landscape form a network of resistance to the objectifying military power of the high kingship, as two lovers flee into the land from the king by transforming into swans. In *Immram Brain*, a traveler experiences the sea (usually a metaphor of alienation in Western literature) as a transformative place full of life with fields and communities. And, in the so-called first branch of the Welsh *Mabinogi*, respect for the otherworldly dimension of the land and its beings integrates human rule with the land.¹²⁹ These early otherworldly narratives oddly fulfill the criteria for “ecocentric” literature, as defined by the pioneering environmental literary studies scholar Lawrence Buell: (1) Featuring a “nonhuman environment” as a presence that suggests “human history is implicated in natural history,” (2) in which “the human interest is not understood to be the only legitimate interest,” (3) “human accountability to the environment is part of the text’s ethical orientation,” and with (4) “some sense of the environment as a process rather than as a constant.”¹³⁰

The ecological face is articulated philosophically from early Irish Sea backgrounds by Eriugena. He describes Nature as including both being and nonbeing, and earth (*terra*, land or region) as a “mystic name” signifying the restored wholeness of nature in theophany or divine manifestation.¹³¹ He opens his *Periphyseon* by stating:

As I frequently ponder and, so far as my talents allow, ever more carefully investigate the fact that the first and fundamental division of all things which either can be grasped by the mind or lie beyond its grasp is into those that are and those that are not, there comes to mind as a general term for them all what in Greek is called φύσις [*phusis*] and in Latin *Natura*.¹³²

From the standpoint of later Western intellectual history, until the emergence of modern ecology, the inclusion of nonbeing in nature remains a radical move, one exemplified in story form by the Celtic Otherworld. Eriugena’s philosophical definition of nature in this way includes both the seen and the unseen, and the

movements between them. It thus incorporates qualities of complexity, diversity, and symbiosis that the environmental philosopher Aarne Naess uses to define ecology.¹³³ The Eriugenist Dermot Moran glosses the opening to the *Periphyseon* as showing how Eriugena “understands [*phusis*] as a structure of concealing and revealing, hiddenness and manifestation, which is one with the nature of truth itself,” although adding that, unlike early Greek philosophers, Eriugena “understands the play of nature as infinite (*apeiron*) and timeless.”¹³⁴ The biblical notion of *ktisis* or Creation also here is related to *phusis* in a Christian context, as echoed by the twentieth-century phenomenologist Martin Heidegger’s notion that *logos* was originally related in meaning to *phusis*, as the appearing of the mystery of Being.¹³⁵

Eriugena’s views drew, with unique twists attributable to his cultural background in the archipelago, on a genealogy of Greek and Syriac writers tracing back through Maximus’ cosmological writings in the seventh century and the apophatic theology of the Christian Dionysius writer in perhaps the fifth century (both of whose works the Irish writer translated into Latin), to works on Genesis and other topics by Athanasius, the Cappadocians and John Chrysostom in Cassian’s era of the desert fathers, as well as by the Greek-influenced Latin works of Ambrose of Milan. Eriugena’s adaptation of Augustine’s writings on nature were contextualized in such other patristic writings.¹³⁶ The essence of even a human being as made in the image of God, or the essence of a theophany in nature, was not fully knowable, and hence was non-objectifiable. But divine energies or activities manifest in the world (or more specifically in a region or landscape of personal place) were engageable as the *logoi* of the *Logos*, or words of the Word, described by Eriugena’s philosophical mentor Maximus.¹³⁷ Not archetypes, these energies in nature were manifest as theophanies or divine emanations. Eriugena defined them as interactively configured with human involvement—depending on one’s experiential engagement with them as obscure or dynamically light-filled, as in his use of the biblical figure of clouds to describe them. To the experientially connected heart, collaborating with their grace in self-emptying but self-realizing love, these divine energies are bright and transformative. To the solipsistic heart they are a backgrounded screen for one’s own objectification. The cosmic figure of theophanies as interactive clouds embodied Eriugena’s belief in salvation by a synergy of free will and *theosis* through grace, in which human nature could participate in theophany (and realize itself) while theophany reached out to human nature. Indeed, the Greek term *logos* is synonymous with not only “word,” but variously with reason, purpose, ground, relationship, idea, concept, thought, argument, harmony, account, discourse, narrative, and, according to Heidegger again, originally with *phusis* in the sense of the making manifest of mystery.¹³⁸ The broader spectrum of definition makes clear the participatory or shared aspect of the term, and of the notion of the *logoi* as energies. The Greek term of *energeia* or energy, identified by Maximus with the *logoi*, has also been glossed in existential terms as “act-life,” which forms another synonym for *logos*.¹³⁹ Maximus himself wrote that the *Logos* (Christ the Creator God) is the *logoi* (the purposes or harmonies of Creation), thus setting up a view of cosmic hierarchy as more an interlaced network of such energies (*logoi*)

than the fixed metaphoric structure envisioned by Dante's poetic distillation of Scholasticism, with its vertical rather than horizontal play.¹⁴⁰ In the Maximian-Eriugenian view, it is through collaboration with the grace of principles that are energies that human beings gain self-realization as the image of God and in that engagement potentially are deified, but not in God's essence. And in early medieval iconographic discourse, the *Logos* was described as thickening into image or flesh in the Incarnation.¹⁴¹ Over time, early monastic writers probably related ascetic doctrines or practices, and especially attitudes involving divine energies, to beliefs about the earthly manifestation of the Otherworld in native narratives. They developed these in literary form as myth that was also to them typological. Spiritual traditions of Inuit-Russian Alaska display this hybridity in modern times, in their purported syncretism of Maximian *logoi* or energies with indigenous beliefs in *inue* (nature spirits in the land), akin also to *manitous* in Great Lakes Indian traditions.¹⁴²

Desire in the modern West is psychologically equated with lack, an emphasis traceable back to Augustinian notions of Original Sin with ramifications for environmental ethics. But in other traditions, such as Chinese Daoism, desire has been equated erotically with creative fulfillment.¹⁴³ In the desert-ascetic ethic, a synergy of free will, divine energies (grace), and the body and natural world also formed an alternate cycle of desire as fulfillment, of getting the mind into the physically grounded heart. This meant to "see with the heart's eyes," in an early Irish phrase that echoes a larger but sometimes forgotten Christian tradition of experiential mindfulness.¹⁴⁴ The deep ecology movement has tried to redefine environmental asceticism in somewhat parallel terms (in greatly different contexts), as involving self-realization and balance, rather than sacrifice in the sense of self-deprivation.¹⁴⁵ Religious scholars, medievalists, and environmental activists today reflect on traditional forms of Christian asceticism as a possible resource in crafting twenty-first-century environmental ethics, on the basis of such alternate shaping of desire.¹⁴⁶ Eriugena's philosophy—articulating a merger of symbolic and real, nonbeing and being, in fantasy-theophany—is sometimes cited informally as a guide to such a sense of environmentally connective desire.¹⁴⁷ In developing doctrines of iconography during this same period, the (lower-case) *logos* embodied in the icon the energy with which the venerator could engage in a relational and dynamic "place-between" art and viewer. In the case of Eriugena's philosophy implicitly, and Otherworld narratives explicitly, places and regions on earth became the place-between for that relationship between reader and text. Text melded with landscape. Following notions of salvation through synergy, positive associations of the body, animals, and native landscape shaped a view of earth as transformative and transformable icon.¹⁴⁸ Interaction between earth and theophanies, with human beings as mediators, focused the cosmic Return to God in the *Periphyseon*. The earth in relation to divine energies becomes the ultimate theophany, following on the Incarnation, requiring respect for the limits it sets and power it gives.

In Eriugena's writing, a fourfold paradigm of Creation shapes a living landscape of emergence and return of Creation to God in a cycle of *kenosis* and *theosis*. It is a cycle of divine self-emptying into Creation and deification of humanity

including Creation at large—in effect the receiving of and participating in theophany. “All the world rose with Him [Christ] because the essence of all the elements was in the body which Jesus assumed,” according to an analogous early Irish cosmological text.¹⁴⁹ Eriugena’s four-in-one dynamic divisions of nature, both synchronic and diachronic, structure the *Periphyseon* in a nonlinear cycle of time that is like an energized landscape, or what the philosopher Dermot Moran terms a “multiplex *theoria*,” reminiscent of the multiplex Otherworld.¹⁵⁰ The four folds of Eriugena’s nature involve that which creates and is not created; that which is created and creates; that which is created but does not create; and that which is not created and does not create.¹⁵¹ These translate, in Eriugena’s schema, to God; the primordial causes or *logoi* in Creation (in effect the uncreated divine energies fully articulated later in Greek doctrine, which Eriugena wrote could be called either created—as he usually did in terms of their effects—or uncreated, depending on human perspective); physical Creation (through which those energies run as theophanies); and God again (in the sense of a cosmic return of all things to God as transcendent nonbeing). Spatiality was causality in Eriugena’s cosmology because the primordial causes, the *logoi* or divine energies, ran through the landscape of physical Creation while always already shaping it.

The ascetic eschatology of the Return to God through participatory synergy is reflected both in the Otherworld trope and in the dynamic geography of the archipelago as both isolating and uniting, again with potential relevance in modern terms to environmental ethics. Hudson highlights literary parallels between Otherworld stories and Christian eschatological texts in the immanent sense of an impending or restored spiritual realm.¹⁵² More than this, Carey’s recent study of the origins of the grail legend suggests an ethical causation behind landscape motifs of the wasteland and fertility in Celtic Otherworld stories.¹⁵³ The state of the land—waste or fertile—depends on an ethical human relation with the dynamic dimension of landscape. Efforts to force entry to the Otherworld end in a disastrous wasteland, to be explored further in chapter two. But the Otherworld also can bestow sovereignty over a fertile land to those seeking a respectful relationship with it. “Here,” as Carey notes of the wasteland motif and its Celtic origins, “there is no contrast between the political and the cosmic,”¹⁵⁴ as in Irish stories of the king needing to partner with the sovereignty goddess of the land. The combination of quasi-environmental ethos and eschatology relates organisms to a premodern spiritual ecology in place-centered rather than time-centered narratives. The texts’ backward-looking fantasy images of landscape anticipate in retro-narrative the impending coming of Christianity in a double-folding of time. The landscape formed in that further folding of time embodies the new faith’s incarnationalism, adapting the desert of Antony to an attempted monasticization of the archipelago of Brigit and Columba. Such developments shaped a narrative project to reimagine the archipelago’s native past in antediluvian proximity to Paradise as well as to a retro-anticipated Christianity—also related to expectation of the Second Coming by early audiences. Landscape-narratives in this dynamic temporality simultaneously reflected and resisted the emergence of more centralized political, ecclesiastical, and economic regimes around the Irish Sea.¹⁵⁵

Alternative temporality helps to shape this ecocentric aspect of early Irish landscape narrative. In the nonlinear time of the Otherworld, beings are longer-lived than humans, or seemingly immortal. This alternate mode of living resists tendencies toward the universalizing of space and time in later Scholasticism, which came to epitomize the drive toward systematic domination of space and time in European culture.¹⁵⁶ Focused on a dynamic landscape of varied temporalities, the Otherworld trope incorporates an active and transformative role for memory as landscape. Both landscape and mnemonics are entwined in an environment that doesn't fit Augustine of Hippo's influential Late Roman sense of reality as only existing in a present of transcendently self-reflexive narrative.¹⁵⁷ The fantasy topography embodies interactive memory in different realities modeling the different temporalities of the nonhuman on earth.¹⁵⁸ And it identifies spirituality with energy in nature, as landscape. This distinguishes the anthropomorphic face of landscape in the trope from objectification of nature.¹⁵⁹ The Otherworld shapes places "outside of all places, even though it may be possible to indicate their location," following the cultural philosopher Mich  l Foucault's definition of heterotopia.¹⁶⁰

Extending the concerns of environmental phenomenology even more closely to the Otherworld trope, geophilosophy¹⁶¹ focuses on a geography of desire as landscape, based in the late-twentieth-century work of Deleuze and Guattari and their focus on a relational sense of desire contextualized within physical environment, in ways interpreted by recent scholarship as parallel to Eriugena's work. Examples of a relational geography of desire would include how Crow Indians in North America consider certain mountains to be their mother and the sky to be their father, or narratives of place at the Confluence of the Susquehanna Valley described just below.¹⁶² The Otherworld trope provides a literary example. Desire for Deleuze and Guattari is "not subjective hankering after what you don't have...but is the material process of connection, registration and enjoyment of flows of matter and energy coursing through bodies in networks of production in all registers, be they geologic, organic, or social," and the imaginative and fantastic interactions related to these ecological flows.¹⁶³ Desire can be flowingly dynamic, or cling to rigid socially defined channels, in their view. But they emphasize the potential "joy that is immanent to desire" rather than desire as transcendent lack.¹⁶⁴ Desire is for them "a spontaneous attraction and emergence of relation," which takes on ecological meaning in Guattari's "ecosophy" (a term he shares with Naess' deep ecology).¹⁶⁵ Philosopher Peter Hallward finds a kind of environmental theophanic perspective in both the geophilosophy of Deleuze (with Guattari) and Eriugena's philosophy of nature, based on "the notion that the universe and all it contains is a facet of...a conceptual equivalent of God (pure creative potential, force, energy, life...)." ¹⁶⁶ In Hallward's gloss, this involves emptying the creature in order for creating to be embodied through it, with "the subject of such thought or love [being] nothing other than infinite creativity or God himself, insofar as he thinks and loves through us."¹⁶⁷

Geophilosophy by articulating an ecological landscape as "a field of immanence" in which desire "lacks nothing" (as Deleuze and Guattari put it) shapes an ecological experience of place different from the alienated landscape of a

desire that is shaped culturally by the Freudian Oedipal myth or Augustinian Original Sin, in which the symbolic is divorced from the real.¹⁶⁸ For Deleuze and Guattari, earth forms the ultimate connective fantasy of their ecosophy, and image is relation in physical contexts.¹⁶⁹ Pictures from the Apollo space missions gave us in the late twentieth century a photographic sense of the earth as icon, reviving in certain modern respects early medieval views of iconographic landscape explored here. Eriugena wrote that earth (*terra*, land or region) imbued with the divine energies mystically signifies the restored wholeness of nature, an ultimate image of interactive theophany.¹⁷⁰ Deleuze and Guattari likewise called earth the ultimate example of a full non-organismic body or bodily fantasy.¹⁷¹ This means that earth as icon exemplifies an ecologically connective fulfillment of what they term imaginative “bodies without organs,” which really are embodied relational desires. The latter are similar in a secular framework to the type of emanative and interactive theophany-image or icon-fantasy described in Eriugena’s view of nature and particularly the earth. Cohen relates how medieval European humoral and astrological theories centered on fluid relations between human bodies and the cosmos express non-organismic bodies or fantasies comparable to those extolled by Deleuze and Guattari.¹⁷² In geophilosophy, such a non-organismic body or image-fantasy is landscape, which when ecologically connective becomes a geography of desire, or following Hallward what could be called “environmental theophany.” It is linked to organic and social energies of desiring, dubbed machines, or assemblages.¹⁷³ In Deleuze and Guattari’s schema, desiring assemblages are biological beings and social networks, which parallel to a degree the participatory human-earthly component of Eriugena’s theophany-fantasies. Also, like the latter, bodies without organs are psychosomatic image patterns that cross boundaries within ecosystems. Ensembles connecting such bodies and assemblages can span human-nature divisions, according to Deleuze and Guattari. They bridge the uncertain border between *autopoiesis* and *ecopoiesis*, or organism-centered and ecologically connected worlds, perception, and experience.¹⁷⁴

Waste and sacrifice together embody the element completing this ecological system of desire as expounded by Deleuze and Guattari, fulfilling in a sense the non-organismic body by allowing a continual flow or “deterritorialization” of desire beyond social convention or *stasis*, a productive economy of art in human terms.¹⁷⁵ This element is distinctly figured in the geography of desire of early Irish Sea desert monasticism and Eriugena’s theophanies through *kenosis* and *hesychasm*. *Kenosis* involves a self-realizing and creative sense of sacrifice, a pouring of the divine into Creation. The social historian René Girard describes this sense in Judeo-Christian tradition as involving, in an innocent sacrifice recognized by society at large, a subversion of symbolic orders of mimetic reality (or objective metaphor) and their basis in consensus scapegoating or objectification.¹⁷⁶ *Hesychasm* involves a Cassianic reconnecting of mind and body in rhythmic *ascesis* or psychosomatic exercise. In Eriugena’s philosophy of nature, *kenosis* and *hesychasm* together provide a kind of cosmic feedback loop, loosing and gathering cycles of transformation and “becoming” for the person and for the larger cosmos. They engage ecologically with theophany through *theosis* or deification.

The result is a participatory and iconographic sense of Creation. Such synergy in Eriugena's iconographic world implies that it embodies a type of "non-Western" desire in fantasy, defined by Deleuze and Guattari, as exemplified by the *Dao* of premodern Chinese philosophy. Deleuze and Guattari identify the *Dao* with their sense of connective desire as "a field of immanence in which desire lacks nothing."¹⁷⁷ The use of the term *Dao* in Chinese Christian Bibles to translate the Greek term *Logos* suggests how the Eriugenian-Maximian cosmic semiotic of "energy theory" could express a partly similar sense of desire in desert asceticism, although in a very different framework.¹⁷⁸ Both premodern traditions involve in different ways an ascetic definition of sacrifice as self-realizing.

In Otherworld writings from the early Irish Sea, this sense of giving one's self up into Creation for self-realization is expressed rhetorically in an iconographic style that can be termed metonymic. Metonymy, or physically connected metaphor, like desire and sacrifice is associated with lack and deprivation in modern Western culture. But metonymy also is identified by Eriugena (as discussed further in chapter three) with the fluid fusion of the symbolic and the physically real, as in early medieval Christian visual and textual iconography. Combining in metaphoric meaning physical relationality and a sense of participatory mystery with the mysterious essence of the word-metonym itself, metonymy (seen in figures such as "sweat" for labor, Greek *pneuma* "breath" for spirit, or "the desert" for monastic life) can in a connective sense of desire be taken as a figure for resisting through relationship the categorizing of nature as object. Thus the medievalist Marijane Osborn has written about metonymy as creative fulfillment in relation to literary landscapes of early Iceland, a northern connector of the Atlantic archipelago. "By means of the *metonymic continuity of place*, the audience outside the story that looks on benevolently but withholds belief begins to merge with the audience that has a spectral existence inside the story along with the narrator, for whom the characters, events, and physical world of the story are real," she writes.¹⁷⁹

New approaches to regional environment in geophilosophy can also help in rereading the Otherworld trope environmentally as a metonymic landscape. Such approaches seek to map a local zone of ecosystems (or bioregion) as a geography of desire. They seek to observe how patterns of creative desires (whether biological, economic, or artistic) interact with physical ecology to help shape geography on a regional level. In one such effort, geographer Mark Bonta surveyed the Olancho province of eastern Honduras to highlight how each of the region's interrelated and varied human communities identified with the land differently, often in resistance to globalization. He concluded that "landscapes have resilience and power as long as the spaces that spawn them remain or become tightly entangled."¹⁸⁰ The early medieval Irish Sea province expressed such a landscape of "resilience and power" through the Otherworld trope as a metonymy of desire tightly entangled with an archipelagic environment interlacing creative human desire with physicality and cosmic ecology. The relation of human culture to a sea related to a larger ocean; the archipelago's intense melding of air, water, and land; its fluid topographical and atmospheric boundaries and horizons; its connection with discrete yet differentiated orientations of geographic space vis-à-vis

the North Sea, North Atlantic, Gulf Stream, and English Channel; these all help to explain development of the trope of a multiplex landscape embodying such relations.¹⁸¹

Hallward in his recent critique of the work of Deleuze for being “out of this world” said the approach of Deleuzeguattarian geophilosophy is essentially theophanic, and comparable to Eriugena’s ninth-century natural philosophy.¹⁸² Hallward’s critique recognizes the odd affinities of these early medieval and modern environmental philosophies, while strangely missing the ecological connections of both by arbitrarily binarizing virtual and actual reality in their approaches.¹⁸³ Earlier discussion of the contexts of early Irish Sea asceticism, culture, and geography highlighted how Eriugena’s engagement with nature did have a central concern with the earth as icon. And approaches of Deleuze and Guattari to geophilosophy and ecosophy involved critiques of an “actual” matrix of symbolic order claiming to be life, from the standpoint of an imaginative reality of interactive environmental narrative. By denying the binary of inside and outside, and positing a de-centered eroticism in their theory of desire, Deleuze and Guattari, as religious scholar Philip Goodchild notes, eliminate the binary of body and idea, in analogy in some respects with the “energy theory” of Eriugena as a type of environmental theophany.¹⁸⁴ As Goodchild puts it, in geophilosophy, with the inside-outside dichotomy eliminated, “there is merely a surface that can be folded up topologically, rather like a Zen master who intersperses the everyday with nonsense and paradox.”¹⁸⁵ A Zen master—or perhaps desert ascetic?

Michael Schellenberger and Ted Nordhaus write in “The Death of Environmentalism” (2004) that “environmentalists need to tap into the creative worlds of myth-making, even religion, not to better sell narrow and technical policy proposals but rather to figure out who we are and who we need to be.”¹⁸⁶ Indeed, if, as Deleuze and Guattari argue, desire is at base relational, and image is relation, then a kind of imaginative (if paradoxical sounding) “real myth” related to environment, or ecopoiesis, becomes essential to self-realization of humans as story-telling creatures, as well as to the project of ecological restoration worldwide.¹⁸⁷ Long deemed heretical in dominant Western Christian discourses, Eriugena’s philosophical analogue to the Otherworld trope is now widely understood as imbued with biblical and patristic traditions. In these connections the odd potential relevance of the Otherworld as a traditional model for twenty-first-century ecological discourses is anything but otherworldly.¹⁸⁸

A contemporary North American “geography of desire” can be traced at the Confluence of the Susquehanna River near where this is written in central Pennsylvania. The Blue Hill’s bluffs on the west bank loom high above the coming-together of the West and North Branches of North America’s longest non-navigable river. Kayaking on the river below one experiences a different flow of time between its wooded banks, passing almost invisibly through neighboring towns. In the bluffs above dwelt, according to legend, the American Indian spirit Otzinachson, amid caves or overhangs. On the river below is Packer Island, center of the lost eighteenth-century Delaware community of Shamokin and on other banks a satellite trading community and the base of Chief Shikellamy, agent of the Iroquois Confederation, which all are being brought back to life today by

my colleague Katherine Faull's translations of early diaries from that community. Local lore claims the chief's face is still glimpsed in the rock formations of the bluffs. At Old Shamokin, Indians and Moravian Christians engaged in personal and cultural exchanges and lived in remarkable friendliness until the French and Indian War.¹⁸⁹ A few decades later the same banks of the Susquehanna figured in utopian hopes for a "Pantisocracy" in the valley advanced by poet Samuel Coleridge (incidentally an Eriugena fan himself) and friends.

The Confluence in early times has been described as capital of the Eastern Woodlands. But while the nineteenth-century lumbering boom denuded the great Eastern Woodlands of the Susquehanna in a massive environmental change akin to the disappearance of tropical rainforests today, that forest lives on imaginatively too in fantasy history chronicles of the valley by James Fenimore Cooper, writing from the source of the Susquehanna on Lake Otsego.¹⁹⁰ Cooper's forest of adventure traces back to the influence on him of the Wandering Wood of Edmund Spenser's *Faerie Queene* and the latter's roots in the Irish Sea Otherworld, the otherworldly Forest of Broceliande of Brittany in French-derived Arthurian romance, and ultimately in myths of Arthur from Celtic Britain. Cooper's geography of desire drew also on accounts of Native American culture by early Moravian Christians (whose theology rejected the *filioque*) at places such as the Confluence. And it informed the imaginations of Americans who in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries formed the nation's first conservation movement, which ultimately shaped the expanse of public forestlands in this central Pennsylvania region.

A confluence of cultures spreads physically below the bluffs, a confluence of temporalities and of flows in human, geological, and ecological networks that entwine and articulate themselves reciprocally, a confluence that is physical yet also narrative and imaginative. In this it is much like landscapes traveled physically and narratively in researching this study in Ireland and Britain. Such a sense of environmental confluence is largely unrecognized and unsung in current global narrative art, iconography, landscape, and history, even with today's ecological impulses. But this confluence, figuratively and topographically, remains a type of geography of desire, a landscape emanating connective narratives of a region that link the bodily and the textual, akin in those respects to the ancient and largely lost Celtic Otherworld.



The Neolithic passage-chamber mound at Newgrange in the Boyne Valley. There purportedly dwelt the god Dagda in mythic satellite tales of the Ulster Cycle, and there the hero Cú Chulainn was conceived. (Author's photo.)

CHAPTER 2

READING THE OTHERWORLD

ENVIRONMENTALLY

In the early Irish story *Tochmarc Étaíne* (“The Wooing of Étaín”), the Otherworld ruler Midir and his former wife Étaín are reunited, a millennium after magic had broken up their marriage, near the royal mounds at Temair (Tara) where she lived with her husband, the high king of Ireland. Midir reminds Étaín, who has been reborn in cycles of new life, of his Otherworld realm in the landscape of Ireland and her old name in it, Bé Find, or “fair lady.”

A Bé Fhind, in ragha lium.
a tír n-ingnadh i fil rind.
is barr sobairci fol and.
is dath snechta for corp slim.
Is ann nád bí muí na tuí.
gel ded and dubai a brai.
is lí sula lín ar sluag.
is dath síon and gach gruadh.
Is corcair muighi cach muín.
is lí sula ugai luin.
cidh cain deicsiu Muighe Fail.
anam iar ngnais Muigi Mair.
Cidh cáin lib coirm Insi Fail,
is mescu cuirm Thiri Mair.
amrai tíre tír asber.
ní théid óc ann ré sén.
Srotha téith milli tar tír.
rogha dé midh 7 fin.
daine delgnaide cen ón
combart cen pecadh cen chol.
Atchiam cach for cach leath.
7 nicon aice nech.
teimel imorbuis Adaim
dodonarcheil ar araim.¹

[Bé Find will you go with me
to a strange land where there is harmony?
Hair there like primrose,
color of snow on a smooth body;
Neither mine nor yours there;
white tooth, dark brow;
The troop of our hosts gladdens the eye—
color of foxglove on each cheek.
As flowers of the plain, pink each neck,
blackbird's eggs, joy of eye;
Though Mag Fáil be fair to see,
it is desolate after experiencing Mag Már;
Though fair be the ale of Inis Fáil,
more confounding that of Tír Már;
Miraculous of lands, the land of which I tell:
youth not leading to ancientness there.
Warm, sweet currents over the land,
choicest of mead and wine;
Outstanding human beings, not disfigured,
procreation without sin or illegality.
We see each one on every side,
and no one sees us;
The shadow of Adam's sin
prevents our being reckoned right.]²

The story forms a part of what modern scholars call the Irish Mythological Cycle, as well as an important prequel to the Ulster Cycle in early Irish fantasy history and foundational text of the Otherworld as landscape trope, highlighting as it does a network of ancient mounds in the Irish countryside. The reconstructed story, based on the text in the Yellow Book of Lecan, stitches together three narrative panels covering more than one thousand years of plot that apparently end in the first century BCE, although the texts themselves probably date to the eighth or ninth century CE.³

In his poetic wooing, Midir juxtaposes references to names for the physical land of Ireland that have fantasy Otherworld associations (Mag Fáil and Inis Fáil) with names of otherworldly landscapes of the imagination that seem to mirror physical Ireland (Mag Már and Tír Már). His words imply that the realm from which he comes is present all around the Irish Sea archipelago and beyond, associated with the biblical Paradise although full of both sensual and artistic delights in the natural world, and of plenty shared among all people. Yet one enters it throughout the narrative via particular portals: the *síde* (the singular *síd* also meaning “peace” in the early Irish period⁴), or mounds still locatable in Irish topography and often dating to the Neolithic era. Thus Midir lives at the mound of Brí Léith (Ardagh Hill in County Longford, Leinster), Étaín's apparent otherworldly home was at Síd Ban Find or Síd ar Femuin (on the plain of Cashel in Munster), and they reunite as a couple at the otherworldly mound-portal of Temair (in County Meath), only to fly as swans to the Munster portal while her husband, the king, Eochaid Airem

(associated by the story with a new form of ploughing), vainly tries to dig up mounds to find them. The story begins with a focus on the famous Neolithic mound site of Bruig na Bóinde (in County Meath) on the bend of the Boyne River (usually identified with Newgrange but part of a complex of mounds also including Dowth, and Knowth) as an Otherworld portal to which the plot returns twice. And across this and a number of early narratives, other cosmographic features such as rivers, wells, the sea, and sky are referenced also as Otherworld portals.

This chapter will argue that such tales participated in and helped to shape narrative environmental landscapes in a non-modern sense of ecoregion as story. In laying the philosophical groundwork for the modern concept of “bioregion” or “ecoregion,” Martin Heidegger articulated personal place as event, as a confluence of what he called the hidden-yet-appearing, singular-yet-multiple, “four-fold” of earth, sky, mortals, and gods, which associated both past and future with “the thing” being experienced as place. He compared this experience of a place as imaginative art to a dance or multiple mirroring, which expresses connections between environment, self, and other. Of this sense of place as relational process, Heidegger wrote, “thinging is the nearing of the world.”⁵ He then extended this definition of place to a regional fourfold. This included not only the experience of “the thing” as place, but also “openness” interconnecting a region of places, which relates the thing and the human, shapes human cultural dialogue with the thing, and reshapes inter-human relations in the process.⁶ “Place opens a region by every time gathering things into their belonging together,” he concluded.⁷

Ecoregion today means an assemblage of natural communities sharing relational patterns of species and ecological processes, environmental conditions, and symbiotic interrelationships.⁸ Yet these are in turn reciprocally defined and influenced by human cultural patterns articulated in narrative. Two textual “maps” in this chapter highlight alternate routes to experiencing the Otherworld as regional landscape in an environmental sense. Thematic categories from landscape studies focus the environmental reading of *Tochmarc Étaíne* as region. Tracing Christian and native pagan meanings in the topography of Wales highlights the Welsh *Mabinogi* as a dynamic image of region resisting political domination of landscape. In the stories, dynamic places such as the *side* of *Tochmarc Étaíne* or the *gorsedd* (probably a linguistically related Welsh term) of Arberth in the *Mabinogi* help constitute culturally imaginative place-regions for eastern Ireland and southern Wales in the early Middle Ages.⁹ These narrative regions reciprocally mediate between places and larger spaces in the culture and environment, such as all of Wales or all of Ireland, the Irish Sea province, the entire Atlantic archipelago of Europe, the mainland continent, and so on—overlapping into Creation at large in a “rhizomic” network.¹⁰ These landscapes generated both place and space, articulating through story how that which is given by the environment entwines that which is shaped by human narrative, mutually reforming one another, involving both grace from a theophany of landscape and earthly struggle to participate in it.¹¹

In these stories, human place becomes the experience of difference: Experience of different temporalities associated with different cosmic environments coming together in the same topography, as in the mound-portals of Ireland in *Tochmarc*

Étaíne and in the reuniting of *Étaín* with Midir after a thousand years through those portals; and experience of different types of being, such as the human-born *Étaín*'s transformation into nonhuman forms associated with nature, her human rebirth, and ultimate move into the Otherworld, as humans interact with characters who represent old native gods and otherworldly rulers such as Midir. This all reflects the probable origins of the Otherworld in pre-Christian symbolism for nonhuman time in the world (the temporality of trees, plants, animals, seasons, stars, rivers, the sea, and topography) related to ancestral memory.

The alternate time and memory of the Otherworld are associated with the dynamic border between eternity and time, emanating in biblical terms from an antediluvian Paradise near the epoch of Creation. It is a native ancestral realm akin to the world of Genesis before the Flood, when giants walked the earth. Yet it also intersects with the eternal realm of spiritual Creation. Just as Creation means both event and continuing landscape, so the Greek *aion* in Christian scripture, meaning created interval, can be translated both "age" and "world." This articulates an enfolded space-time of eternity figured by the Otherworld in narratives, framed by a patristic sense of an uncreated everlasting beyond eternity. The environmental phenomenologist Erazim Kohák describes a "natural time" of the earth that goes beyond either subjective or objective human temporalities and overlaps with a distinctively human experience of eternity. Such natural time is "set within the matrix of nature's rhythm which establishes personal yet nonarbitrary reference points." Experience of eternity involves "awareness of the absolute reality of being, intersecting with the temporal sequence of its unfolding at every moment...nontemporal reference...grasping the moral, non-instrumental value of being."¹² Their interweaving establishes a dynamic sense of region in a larger cosmic context. And that overlapping of reader, modes of being, time and non-time, and topography in storytelling as landscape here becomes iconographic itself, participatorily symbolic of the flow of everlasting uncreated divine energies amid the interaction of time and eternity, as in John Scottus Eriugena's philosophy of theophanies infusing the earth to be explored in chapter three.

Feedback between human culture and environment in such story becomes a narrative process akin to Evan Thompson's image of forming a path while walking, which can physically shape an ecoregion.¹³ American Indian cultural traditions shaped prairie and oak savannah ecosystems of the upper Midwest, whose remnants today engage environmental restorationists in shaping their own narratives for tending and reviving old prairie groves.¹⁴ Irish Sea texts such as *Tochmarc Étaíne* and the *Mabinogi* engaged readers in empathy with nonhuman realms, reflecting communal ascetic ethics and relational land practices resisting a centrally controlled landscape. Such narratives of environmental landscape, however different in context, share a radical intertextuality incorporating topography with story and cultural practice. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari wrote that through experience of a regional "opening" brought by such art, "The landscape sees."¹⁵ Art (including narrative) allows us first to experience immanence reconnecting us with our body through sensations that, combined, in turn evoke a "becoming-animal" experience of imagination finally "opening" landscape to

its own subjectivity. Philip Goodchild in glossing Deleuze and Guattari concludes: “The work of art opens thought onto the body and landscape, so as to give a voice to the body before all words,” and ultimately to landscape as well, from relationship with it.¹⁶ Ultimately, through narrative relating body to land, the landscape speaks as a story beyond words, too, and in effect looks out, as if an icon, at *us*.

The Ulster Cycle as Regional Landscape

A brief landscape survey based on the Ulster Cycle can outline this sense of regional narrative before exploring *Tochmarc Étaíne* in detail. At the climax of the Cycle’s central work, *Táin Bó Cúailnge* (“The Cattle Raid of Cooley”) in the version from the Book of Leinster, the otherworldly Brown Bull of Cooley ends up in northwest Ireland. When the bull sees “the beautiful strange land” (*in tír n-álaind n-aneóil*) of Connacht,¹⁷ the realm of the quasi-goddess Queen Medb,¹⁸ he bellows three times loudly. His counterpart, the white bull of Connacht, answers. The two begin a mutual struggle to the death. Their battle shapes and gives names to terrain, but also ends the foundational twelfth-century text by signaling the inability of the best warriors of Ireland to possess the creatures for whom they had fought at great cost. The ending marks the exhaustion of the old order of pagan warrior realms just before the coming of Christ. It also reveals the landscape of Ireland, by synecdoche in the bulls, as central character in a complex narrative that developed during at least four centuries of storytelling. A “prequel” to the main story describes the bulls as shape-shifting herdsmen of otherworldly rulers who inhabit Neolithic mounds, portals to the ancestral landscape of the Otherworld.¹⁹ Other early lore suggests that the bulls bore the names of twins born to the goddess Macha, whose own name probably derived from *mag* or “field” or “plain,” as a goddess of the land.²⁰ And the struggle of the twin bulls, light and dark, suggests seasonal cycles of change, reinforced by the timing of the *Táin* across the winter season into the spring, from the quarter holiday of Samain to that of Imbolc, with an aspect of sexual difference because one of the bulls is identified with a kingdom led by a woman and the other with a kingdom led by a man.²¹ Topographically, Macha is associated with the prehistoric mound complex Emain Macha, legendary center of the warriors who fight vainly to keep the Brown Bull as property of their realm. That site features twinned mounds matching her twin offspring. Macha’s curse, related to disrespect of the land goddess by the hypermasculine Ulstermen at the time of the birth of her twins, keeps the warriors apparently suffering like women in labor during the first part of the action as the forces of the goddess-like figure Medb of Connacht attack their realm.²²

In this region of landscape-story, the twin-hilled site at Emain Macha (itself containing other twinned features as well²³) in turn is complexly twinned topologically with another mound complex at Ard Macha or Armagh, just two miles to the east. There an old pagan center on Cathedral Hill became the legendary base for St. Patrick and later focus of ecclesiastical power struggles that probably played a role in shaping the *Táin* narratives, as will be explored further in chapter six. Emain Macha and Ard Macha were, in effect, the topographical Old and

New Testaments framing the Ulster Cycle.²⁴ (Another famous twinned hill site in an opposite part of Ireland was known as the Paps of Anu, breasts of a fertility goddess; perhaps a similar pre-Christian tradition once held sway at the twin mounds of Emain Macha?)

But there are still more entwined filaments to this regional landscape of stories. Not far to the south of Emain Macha, along a curve of the Boyne River (the source of which, in a well associated with the sea, purportedly boasted hazel trees dropping nuts of wisdom to magic salmon²⁵), sits the island's premiere Neolithic mound complex including Brúig na Bonde, featured in certain prequel tales to the *Táin* cycle including *Tochmarc Étaíne*. This complex was in ancient times part of a fertile prehistoric valley civilization, and is located near what later became other early Patrician Christian sites. It formed one of many vestibules between everyday life and otherworldly beings: either old gods or conquered earlier inhabitants haunted the land, perhaps one and the same. By design of the original builders, each winter solstice the sun shines into the passageway mound of Newgrange there, illuminating inner chambers and stone carvings upon them. The Neolithic curves of that art (emplaced patterned movements sometimes interpreted as an image of Creation) reappear in both Christian sculpture and the illustrations of the gospel Book of Kells and other illuminated manuscripts from the Irish Sea zone millennia later.²⁶

That leads us to a third dimension of these regional narratives, beyond the presentation of a quasi-historical region of Ulster and the Otherworld landscape of Ireland, namely an environmental textuality. The visual style of the famous *Chi-rho* page of the Book of Kells shares an exteriorized iconographic style with the Otherworld trope. Some suggest that this illuminated book art could be stereoscopic in intent.²⁷ Its imagery cues a “pop-up” effect, resisting any interiorized illusion of *trompe l'oeil* “realism.” The effect cues the reader-viewer's focus into a relational, quasi-physical medial ground between subject and object. In using such techniques, the art in effect shapes an environmental place in the foreground between it and the viewer. The effect “thrusts focal points out at us,” while “reminding us of our distance from heavenly things,” as historian James Billington puts it. The image—in this case the textual landscape—again looks out at us. Readers are not meant to go inside and penetrate text that is both topological and topographical, but to negotiate and engage with text in a bodily context of topography. This effect will be explored in detail in chapter five.

Map 1: *Tochmarc Étaíne*, a Contour Guide to the Otherworld

Tochmarc Étaíne effectively functions as a *remscéla* or prequel to the *Táin Bó Cúailnge*, the central epic of the Ulster Cycle, in that it explains how violation of the contractual agreement between the high king and the Otherworld in effect led to chaos and divisions among a legendary pentarchy of realms.²⁸ The first of the three main parts of *Tochmarc Étaíne*, based on the Yellow Book of Lecan text, illustrates the power of the Otherworld in shaping time and space in relation to landscape. A dynamic mix of the known and the unknown in birth, love, and death moves behind and roils the complex story line, all in relation to an alternate

temporality of landscape that is beyond-human. First, a fertility god, the Dagda (the “good god”), uses deception to sleep at the Bruig na Bóinde mound with a goddess, Bóand. Her name is linked with that of the mound and the Boyne and seems to have a root meaning of “cow.”²⁹ The Dagda, another one of whose names stems from a term for horse, is high king of the people of the Otherworld or Tuatha Dé Danann. He changes the apparent flow of time to hide his affair with Bóand from her husband, Elcmar. Nine months pass as a day, and Bóand gives birth to their offspring, the divine youth Óengus, the Mac ind Óc, or “young son.” He is fostered or brought up by Midir, who rules at a mound portal in another part of Ireland. With the assistance of Midir and his father, young Óengus gains control of his mother’s Bruig na Bóinde portal from Elcmar on Samain, a liminal festival in autumn (at our modern Halloween) associated with access to the Otherworld. Óengus gains permission to dwell in the mound for a day and a night, and thus for a day and a night perpetually. The Dagda decides in favor of Óengus’ right to do so, declaring that Elcmar loved his own life more than his land (*ar ba cainte lat do ainim oldas do thú*)³⁰ when he allowed Óengus to establish a relationship to it for a cycle of time (a day and a night). Midir then visits his foster-son Óengus at his new mound, but is injured by accident in one eye, thus becoming unable to continue as a king under Irish tradition, due to physical imperfection. Óengus arranges for a healer to restore Midir. Then, Óengus agrees to help Midir obtain the beautiful Étaín of the Ulaid (the realm of Ulster) as his queen. She is the daughter of royal Ulster parents who, however, goes through transformations that seem to morph her into an otherworldly figure. Étaín’s father gives Óengus (the Mac Óc) seemingly impossible tasks in order to win her, related to shaping the topography of Ulster for the father’s rule and providing wealth from the earth in gold and silver equal to his daughter’s physical body. This accomplished, she is given to Midir. He takes her home to his *síd* or mound. But Midir already has a wife waiting there. Trained in druidic arts, she transforms Étaín into a magical fly via other forms. This leads to Étaín’s rebirth as a human more than a thousand years later.

The second part of the story illustrates further the folded nature of space and time in the Otherworld. It tells of the separation and initial reunion of Midir and Étaín after incredible physical transformations across a millennium. Étaín is reborn as daughter of an Ulster couple. Midir comes to her from the *síde*, later reciting the verses quoted at the beginning of the chapter to win her back. Meanwhile a festival is called for at Temair. However, the new high king Eochaid or Echu Airem (whose name echoes the horse moniker of the Dagda) needs to find a wife in order for him to host the feast, and marries Étaín. Echu’s brother Ailill Angubae (who shares a name with Étaín’s father in her earlier life) becomes obsessed with his brother’s new wife. Ailill wastes away for love of her, and when she finally agrees to meet with him to heal him, he falls into an enchanted sleep. It is Midir (from her previous life) who shows up in his stead. Étaín tells Midir that she will return with him to the Otherworld, but only if her husband King Eochaid grants permission.

The Otherworld provides a larger context of difference that shapes place in the story. Mysteries of life (parentage, sexual difference, love and marriage, life

after death) relate creationary moments of landscape to the shaping of order through marriage. On such “an immanent plane of composition,” as Goodchild glosses Deleuze and Guattari, “[h]umanity ceases to be alienated from the plane of nature.”³¹ The conclusion of the story tells of how Étaín and Midir restore their marriage and Eochaid loses his queen. Midir and the king gamble over *fidchell*, a native board game. In their matches Midir must pay back his intentional losses with otherworldly help, to do impossible tasks for the high king related to reshaping the landscape of Ireland. By losing two games, Midir lulls the king into a false sense of security. Midir wins the third game, having secured as a pledge for his winning the promise that he be able to embrace Étaín once. This he does at Temair, surrounded by the king’s guards. When the two embrace they transform into swans, and fly away to the network of Otherworld mounds. The king tries fruitlessly to dig up the mounds. Finally, he is promised the opportunity to win Étaín back if he can identify her from a group of seemingly identical women. He ends up choosing his own daughter unknowingly, and has a child with her, setting off a sequence of events that end in sequel stories with the collapse of the high kingship and the apocalyptic epic action of the longer *Táin Bó Cúailnge*. (In some fragments of the story, Eochaid regains Étaín by force, but the disastrous results are similar.)³²

Desire is embodied in landscape that becomes region rather than an object, through Midir’s wooing of Étaín and her growing openness to the Otherworld, which together come to embody a reciprocal desire for and by landscape. The contours of this reciprocity of landscape as story outline the environmental reading given in the following sections, for which categories I am in debt to suggestions from landscape scholar E. Joanna Guldi.

1. *Omphalos and Learning*

The *omphalos* as *axis mundi* (linking earth and sky) or sacred center and beginning of the world is a source of cosmic learning in many traditional cultures as described by Mircea Eliade.³³ But the assumption that one is in possession of such an *axis mundi* (and its potential shamanistic wisdom) in *Tochmarc Étaíne* paradoxically seems an obstacle to experiential wisdom about life and the earth.³⁴ Each section of the story startlingly defines the failure and reform of an objectified sense of *omphalos*. Elcmar’s possession of the mound complex of the Boyne at the start vanishes next to Óengus’ relational experience of it as place-event in a night and a day. Midir thinks he rules the mound of Brí Léith (Ardagh Hill) but a lack of relationship there with his wives subverts that tenure. Eochaid rules at Temair but his attempt to objectify both it and his wife leads to disaster. While Eochaid attempts to guard the *omphalos* with warriors against the Otherworld, Midir and Étaín join that Otherworld through their transformation into swans flying from Temair back to Brí Léith. Indeed, there seems to be no hegemonic *omphalos*, no Rome, in early Irish Otherworld narratives, despite later efforts to fashion Temair as a “second Rome” that themselves reflect how retrospective portrayals of pre-Christian tradition mirror a doubled sense of landscape.

One early Irish tradition indeed placed a symbolic political center at Temair and a symbolic center of the land at Uisnech, comparing them to two kidneys of a cow, the island thus having elliptical centers but also being a type of living creature.³⁵ As indicated in *Tochmarc Étaíne*, many other mound portals throughout the land also were otherworldly centers, offering experience of personally relational folds in space as region. Unlike Lucretian or Scholastic universalisms of space, the Otherworld does not privilege individual cognition (and its political extensions in church, state, academic, or modern global markets) as the container of infinite space, but rather stresses experiential, personal relationships.³⁶ Instead, Étaín herself becomes ultimately a flowing type of personal *omphalos*, one related not only to body but to contractual personal relations with the nonhuman. As a bodily figure of the Sovereignty land goddess,³⁷ she is a symbol in movement of a personally relational, rather than objectifiable, experience of life, yet always in the context of landscape.³⁸ Her name itself has been taken by scholars to mean both “radiance” or “passion” and “jealous” (her radiance being the object of jealousy perhaps), evoking multiple dynamic views of her character.³⁹ She becomes in effect a source of experience and wisdom in the integration of Otherworld and this-world, a mediating figure or living *omphalos* comparable in typology to the Church, or the potential of humanity to overlap physical and spiritual worlds, as in Eriugena’s contemporary philosophy to be explored in chapter three. True, key Sovereignty texts from early Ireland instrumentally supported claims by male scions of the Uí Néill dynasties to over kingship.⁴⁰ But implicit integration through narrative of the otherworldly and human realms in the Sovereignty figure includes a sense of the non-objectifiable and always relational nature of place as event in Heideggerian region.

The experience of the “land of women” embodied by Étaín relates to Luce Irigaray’s explication of the shaping of place by sexual difference, and particularly a sense of the female body as fluidly double-enfolded landscape, which is qualitatively different from any objectified notion of *omphalos* as a phallic *axis mundi*.⁴¹ Sovereignty as “feminine subtext”⁴² in the story reflects perhaps in part a less antagonistic attitude toward women observed in early Irish monasticism by comparison with later monastic literatures of the West, as well as distinctive legal rights of women seen in early Irish law texts despite gendered legal restrictions.⁴³ In reading Étaín as a “pan-*omphalos*,” it may be helpful to consider the early medieval Christian identification of Mary the Mother of God with Paradise and with an enclosing mountain, her womb paradoxically having encompassed while also having been nurtured by the Creator God. This parallels Irigaray’s view of the female body as both enveloping and enveloped, rather than a closed container of misogynistic definition. It also evokes the patristic image of Paradise as a mountain encompassing the world, but open to larger spiritual realms beyond.⁴⁴

The analogy between an encompassing Paradise-mountain and the Otherworld in stories such as *Tochmarc Étaíne* echoes Irigaray’s rereading of patristic Marian theology, centered on mutually reciprocal air or breath (related to spirit as *pneuma*, as expressing an elemental sense of region as process). For Irigaray, air reflects a physical nonbeing that is at once mutually reciprocal, potentially empathetic, and evocative of sexual difference. She reads Eve in the foundational Genesis

narrative as trying to possess “breath [spirit] that is irreducible to knowledge.” Trying to possess the fruit of knowing good and evil is to conceptualize, and thus binarize, the world. But for Irigaray, the Virgin Mary (who again is also related to the earth), “conserving her virginal breath, free and available,” is “able to keep and cultivate a spiritual relation to breathing, to the soul.” Mindful of breath, she is mindful of bodily relations with elemental fluidities of life, and able to engage in an exchange of breath, words, and the spiritual with the Holy Spirit (*pneuma*’s articulation being in *logoi*). This “retains a relation to life, to the soul, to love, particularly divine love, that is neither appropriation nor consumption of the self, nor of the other, nor of God.”⁴⁵ Analogous description of air as a complex physical but metonymic surface between the spiritual and the environment is found in early Irish exegesis, as Augustinus Hibernicus describes air as compacted in water with clouds, associated with biblical aerial waters. Clouds also form Eriugena’s key symbol for theophany-fantasy, which like Deleuze and Guattari’s “body without organs” overrides the divide between body and idea. For both early Irish exegetes, air and water in certain circumstances figure a sparkling divine energy that is a hidden dimension in the bodily world, manifest in biblical miracles.⁴⁶ Patristic doctrine of deification or *theosis* undoubtedly influenced the trope of a world-encompassing Paradise, which is echoed in Midir’s poetic descriptions of the Otherworld to Étaín as a landscape all around us, but not visible to mortals due to Adam’s sin.⁴⁷ Irigaray imagines in environmental terms a process of deification: “They draw one another into the mystery of a word seeking to be made flesh. Trusting inordinately in that which makes the body and the flesh of all diction: air, breath, song.”⁴⁸ Here language, in the Maximian sense of the *logoi* of the *Logos*, or discourses of the Discourse, becomes the Otherworld that heightens experience of difference as place, in a geography of desire beyond any ethic of domination. The ninth-century Irish *Sanas Cormaic* (“Cormac’s Glossary”) seems to reference such cosmic intertextuality, comparing cycles of rebirth in native traditions such as those of Étaín to a poem’s prosody melding into a connective essence of life across a spectrum of identities.⁴⁹

The experience of difference as energy of place, in a region-as-*omphalos* whose source of wisdom is entwined across the landscape, suggests a relational land ethic as wisdom.⁵⁰ The Celtic trope of hierogamic marriage to a figure of the land embodies such “place-wisdom.” Eochaid’s carelessness with Étaín costs him his sovereignty in more ways than one, leading to a fruitless attempt to objectify not only his wife but his land, losing both. When Midir arrives to lay claim to his negotiated right to embrace Étaín, Eochaid tries to protect his rulership and possession of the land goddess militarily, to no avail. Eochaid refuses to sell her, Étaín reiterates that she won’t accompany Midir without Eochaid’s permission, but Eochaid agrees to allow Midir to embrace her, since the king has given his word, thoughtless (like Elcmar before him) of his relationship with the land.

A regional emphasis on *ethos* rather than fixed *omphalos* parallels an emphasis on contractual, personal relations in nature suggested by early Irish names for Creator, *Dúilem*, and for created thing/element/being, in plural form Creation, *dúil*.⁵¹ Correlating with Eriugena’s notion of dynamic divine energies being within Nature, the related meaning of the terms evokes nature, while their root

stem echoes a word for native legal lore.⁵² Native law emphasized contractual personal relationships between lord and client in negotiating early Ireland's multiple hierarchies.⁵³ Irish writers traced contractual relations with the world back to analysis of Adam and Eve's Fall from Paradise as a broken contract, a strong theme in the first Irish legal texts and central to early Irish social thinking.⁵⁴ By 700 CE or earlier, the term *manchuine* had come to mean personal service due by a client in society at large, although derived from a term for monastic.⁵⁵ The *céli Dé* ascetic movement (discussed in chapter six) evoked by its name the relation between God and human beings in nature as contractual: *céile* (the singular form) has the meaning at once of client, servant, neighbor, companion, or fellow of God. But in any case, this contractual ethic also helps to explain Amy C. Eichhorn-Mulligan's observation that the Sovereignty trope's figuring of the feminine can be open to interpretation as either passive or empowering.⁵⁶ Interpreting the effect must depend on the social or ethical (or in this case environmental) contextualizing of the notion of contract. In early Irish texts, kings seemed to contract the land from literary earth-goddess figures of Sovereignty, while contractual *gessa* or taboos restricted the "gift" of the land to them. The king's truth (*fír flatha*) related to his word as a sharing and fulfillment of the contract of Sovereignty in justice, which effects fertility and prosperity in the landscape. That "truth" in a late Middle Irish text is identified with a cup bestowed by otherworldly women, presumably Sovereignty figures, a motif reflected at the end of *Tochmarc Étaíne* as well as in later grail stories.⁵⁷ A learned class that was of (but not entirely in) overlapping social hierarchies shaped narratives of this Otherworld that was both in-place and out-of-place, in which learning emerged from rhizomic relationships rather than from a defined *omphalos* connecting earth and sky vertically. As culture brokers, they had an interest in a personally contractual model of the world.⁵⁸

2. Creation and Mapping

Mound-portals of the Otherworld in *Tochmarc Étaíne* reveal a hidden map of Ireland. Yet transformations of topography in the tale suggest the transitory sense of mere human mapping as a means of establishing order in nature, while its narrative evokes an ongoing shaping and transfiguration of landscape. Just as contractual, embodied relationship forms the story's alternative to a centralized wisdom of landscape, so too marriage in *Tochmarc Étaíne* figures an alternative way of experiencing landscape beyond mapping, as personal region. The start of the story associates experience of landscape in space-centered time with mythological themes of creation, in the love of Bóand and the Dagda, and in the birth of Óengus at Bruig na Bóinde. Óengus shapes landscape for Midir in the Ulster realm of Étaín's father as her bride-price, clearing fields and changing the course of rivers with help from his divine father the Dagda, to form central spaces and transportation routes for the human kingdom. Later, Midir with his otherworldly allies must clear stones from Mide, lay rushes over the realm of Tethbae, build a causeway over bogland, and forest the northwest for the high king, all to restore his marriage with Étaín.⁵⁹ Marriage can here be related both to the native

Sovereignty trope and to Christian typology of the relation between Christ and Church, and association of the church with the Virgin Mary and the earth. (Dean A. Miller argues for parallels between Celtic Sovereignty legend and the Virgin Mary's granting of authority to male emperors in Byzantine iconography⁶⁰; and Christina Harrington notes that Marian devotion was established early in Ireland without the binarizing of the Mother of God and earthly women found in later medieval Catholicism.⁶¹)

Marriage in the story acts as a figure for the bodily entwining of difference in landscape, erotic in the ecological sense that the conservation writer Wendell Berry recognizes in another culturally foundational premodern text, Homer's *Odyssey*:

We thus come again to the paradox that one can become whole only by the responsible acceptance of one's partiality. But to encapsulate these partial relationships is to entrap and condemn them in their partiality... They are enlivened and given the possibility of renewal by the double sense of particularity and generality: one lives in marriage and in sexuality, at home and in the world... it is impossible to care for each other more or differently than we care for the earth.⁶²

Eochaid in his possessive sense of marriage and land-sovereignty tries to dig up the mounds in a destructive type of mapping that would erase difference from landscape and replace a sense of region with a more universal space of control and domination. The result remaps the island's political landscape, sparking chaos-erupting preparation for the coming of Christianity. Étaín's daughter becomes mother of the famous high king Conaire. Conaire's demise in the story's sequel, *Togail Bruidne Dá Derga*, is associated with vengeance from the Otherworld.⁶³ By contrast, the reuniting of Midir and Étaín in the Book of Lecan text could be read as typing the wedding of Christ and Church, the latter in the early medieval cosmic sense of community including the land, by contrast with the bride of Christ emphasized as the individual believer in later medieval terms. (In this, the story of Óengus' paternity also could type the Incarnation of Christ, with Óengus a kind of mythic archetype for Midir.)

The idea of a unified map of male high kingship, however loved by the rising dynasties of the time in which *Tochmarc Étaíne* actually was written down, is always forever subverted by multiple dynamic dimensions present in the Otherworld, which require a different type of relational and personal mapping. The disrespect accorded the land and its embodiment Étaín are reflected not only in subsequent dissipation of the warrior systems of Ulster and Connacht in the *Táin Bó Cúailnge*, but in the lack of a proper king to balance the *Táin's* Sovereignty figure, Medb. Her humiliation paves the way for a new pattern of land sovereignty based in the figure of Mary, embodying both earth and church.⁶⁴ Texts such as *Baile in Scáil* (written originally perhaps in the ninth century although revised later) suggest the Otherworld both besieged and supported the high kingship at Tara, reflecting perhaps native beliefs still current outside monastic cultural networks.⁶⁵ But while heavily implicated with royal dynasties, early Irish monasticism itself must have shared to some extent a counter-cultural side with its contemporary Byzantine

counterpart, the latter known for riotous and obdurate monastics often at odds with emperors and bishops alike. The potential for subversion by monastics of any emerging political system distinct from social networks is reflected in the Otherworld's ambiguous relation to any totalizing political map.⁶⁶ Its narratives shape stories of the origins of place-landscape ultimately at odds with universal spatial mapping in the political realm. But at the same time its model of relational marriage as landscape evokes images of both dynamic cultural unity and quasi-ecological sensibility toward the Other for monastic-brokered social networks around the Irish Sea.

3. *Portals of Life and Death*

Ancient mounds bracket *Tochmarc Étaíne*, which begins and ends at portals to another dimension interwoven in landscape. The mound-portals open onto both Irish topography as a region of real recognizable places, and onto the Otherworld of ancestral deities, older inhabitants, memory shaping identity with the land, and limits and ambiguities of mortality.⁶⁷ Unlike the *axis mundi*, these portals do not connect earth and heaven vertically. As patristic scholar John Romanides described such non-Augustinian rhizomes of temporality, alternative temporality, and non-temporality: "Although time exists within the ages, all created beings are not circumscribed by time, because there are certain created beings (such as the ranks of angels, the demons, and the souls of the departed) who are independent of time and do not live in time, but in the ages": free from normal restrictions of time and space, but still in a created temporality unlike the divine energies.⁶⁸ In such a framework, Otherworld narratives highlight "the mysteries of the afterlife and of rebirth" in relation to landscape not in a static Augustinian "eternal present."⁶⁹ *Tochmarc Étaíne* evokes an active mode of memory, in experience of the difference between life and death in Étaín's rebirths amid a continuing landscape.⁷⁰ The mounds become entryways for Étaín into transformation, rebirth, apparent death, and healing. And they also form thresholds of life and power for male rulers in the story. In such "transpersonal" landscape (to use a term from deep ecology), self-realization hinges on extension of self into a topographic landscape or ecoregion that includes the nonhuman.⁷¹ Authentic realization of self is located in the tale's fusion of landscape and memory in topography, akin to the continual remembering of death and the dead by monastics in communal and bodily portals of mnemonic rebirth associated with the "desert" on the archipelago.

In Étaín's own transformations into the form of a beautiful giant fly, a reborn woman, and then apparently an otherworldly being—at once ambiguously human, transhuman, and otherworldly—the audience can experience a personal engagement or extension of lived body, reaching into a "place-between" reader and text in topography. And Étaín becomes an agent of inverse perspective in her relationships, impenetrable in all her transformations while turning social conventions of time and space inside-out. Her iconic persona, described in intensely iconographic terms associating color and the natural world in the story's sequel *Togail Bruidne Dá Derga* (and in some ways reminiscent of Constance

in Chaucer's "Man of Law's Tale" as analyzed by Elizabeth Robertson⁷²), figures the theophanic in Eriugena's sense of synergy between divine energies and human fantasy. As both a human and a Sovereignty goddess figure, Étaín types the doctrine of theosis, which would have fulfilled native cycles of afterlife and rebirth for Irish Sea Christian literati. Early medieval Irish thought ambiguated the distinction between resurrection and metamorphosis,⁷³ perhaps reflecting the transfiguring of both the human and the nonhuman in Christian *theosis* in tandem with indigenous traditions. (Eriugena figured theophany by similarly linking the spiritual and the physical in explicitly environmental terms by the biblical symbol of a cloud melding water and air in relation to land and sun.⁷⁴) In modern secular terms, an environmentally self-realized person, Étaín, melds into a region.

Augustine famously argued in Book 11 of his *Confessions* that neither the past nor the future exists, but that memory in the present shapes a self-reflexive narrative bridging the past, present, and future, and in the process time and eternity.⁷⁵ This "eternal present" is the basis for the objectified sense of Augustinian landscape in Western European culture. This view mapped Creation as a time-centered matrix of monumental space and linear time to be transcended by man. But in the Otherworld's rabbit-warren of portals within landscape, we find a distinct sense of what is essentially a non-temporality of Creation, in which the present is formed by folding together alternate but real dimensions of the appearing of the future and the hiddenness of the past.⁷⁶ Such experience includes engaging hidden nonbeing as reality, in an encounter with mortality that is ecological and nonhuman, as in Étaín's rebirths. Carey aptly refers to the Otherworld in this sense of alternate temporality as "an eternity which lies beyond, but at the same time determines, the mortal realities of life and death."⁷⁷ The past becomes an alternate reality, transformative of the present rather than a background. This involves, Casey notes, "creative transformation of experience rather than its internalized reduplication in images or traces construed as copies."⁷⁸

The literal flight of the lovers into that alternate non-time in the final section of *Tochmarc Étaíne* highlights the Otherworld portals as ancestral networks that cross any discrete sense of mortality and identity in articulating a personal region. As swans, Étaín and Midir fly toward Síd Ban Find in Munster. That topographical site appears to be named for Étaín's otherworldly moniker Bé Find, as perhaps her old residence, but was also called Síd ar Femuin, which in *Togail Bruidne Dá Derga* is described as the residence of the god of poetry Bodb Derg, suggesting identification of the Otherworld with textuality. Eochaid's choice of his daughter ignores the different temporality of the Otherworld as well: Étaín supposedly was just pregnant with this daughter when she and Midir flew away as swans into the sky above Temair. The portals of the story and its sequel, and of the Otherworld trope at large, rhizomically entwine land, sea, and sky, and the multiple networks of hierarchies (earthly and spiritual) within them. The mounds do not simply form a matrix of universal space and time, but a place-region folded in the experience of the difference between life and death.

4. *Places and Events of Blindness*

If the story evokes in Otherworld portals a dynamic region, it also connects objectification of landscape with a sense of contained location, and the experience of blindness in place with a failure to embody it as event. This parallels the sense of landscape in early Christian apophatic or negative theology, which in the tradition of the desert fathers and Greek patristics (transmitted to the Irish Sea through the Dionysian texts, Maximus, Eriugena, and the asceticism of spiritual elders) suggests darkness as an image of the essential mystery of God, moving in the relationships of divine energies. In the early Irish Ulster and Mythological Cycles, situated blindness ultimately is related to a lack of experiential knowledge of place as event, including (in the Christian literary context) ignorance by those within the stories of the upcoming Incarnation. Such blindness-in-place exposes the folly of attempts to objectify Sovereignty in supposed control over one's self, another, or the land—and the inability of unredeemed eyes (in a gaze unengaged with the divine energies) to realize a dynamic landscape of earthly life as eventful place. Place reduced to a GPS-style point becomes a condition of blindness.

Such a sense of blindness in relation to place (in which place as event goes unexperienced) culminates in Eochaid's choice of his daughter, comfortably mistaking her for his wife after unsuccessfully trying to defend Temair, thinking his place was a familiar object that could be secured. In the opening, we see too Elcmar's loss of his wife, and then his home, which occur through lack of care for his relational life-place. Blindness to place as event, and attempting to experience place as object, can be associated too with attempted erasure of sexual difference in a universalizing sense of space—the loss of Irigaray's feminine landscape as a type of place-event, through the gaze of masculine rulership. Yet from each main performance of a “blind place” in the story there also emerges a new sense of place in relation to Étaín—Étaín as fly, Étaín reborn, and Étaín reunited with Midir in the mounds.

When Eochaid's spy gazes on the otherworldly construction of the causeway at night, in order to possess knowledge of how this “natural supernatural” magic works, he disrupts the project by an objectifying gaze, a type of blindness toward the Otherworld as an event of place. (Archaeologists cite this episode in the story when interpreting the remains of the Corlea Trackway in County Longford, Ireland—a bogland causeway that appears to have been built in a year in the first century BCE, as a ritual link for access to the bog rather than merely passage over it.⁷⁹) There is perhaps an environmental analogy to this episode in the fate of dynamic management by indigenous peoples of prairie and wetlands in North America. Euroamericans gazed upon such ecosystems and declared them unmanaged “waste” or exotic virgin landscape without understanding their ecological (“natural magic”) and cultural significance—objectifying them in a romanticized view accompanied by a matrix of right-angled property lines, quickly followed by tile-drainage for monocultural farming.⁸⁰

The Celticist E.G. Van Hamel observed that early Insular mythology featured not a pantheon of gods, but protectors of the land empowered by knowledge

of the land, together with sorcerers.⁸¹ Van Hamel's "knowledge of the land" involved experience of spatial causality (non-teleological by modern definitions), paralleling the ascetic "energy theory" discussed earlier. It implicitly resists any penetrating or possessive gaze. It relates to a sense, in desert asceticism and hesychasm, of Christianity as a healing praxis rather than a religion, in which experience can be transformed by being placed in a different spatio-temporality that resists such a gaze—a new dimension or region that can be a place of blindness to the malicious or unwitting, as in the protective transformation of St. Patrick and company into the form of deer, echoing druidic charms of invisibility.⁸² Hidden therapeutic aspects of landscape are also suggested by Eriugena's discussion of the "natural" biblical healing of Naaman the Syrian in the river Jordan. Eriugena identifies the healing with Creation's Return to God, the ultimate gathering of difference in experience of place, forming regional connection of place across the cosmos in personal transfiguration rather than abstract transcendence, annihilation, or any matrix of infinite space.⁸³

In Midir's words to Étaín quoted in the opening of this chapter, Otherworld beings "see everyone everywhere, and no one sees us," since Adam's sin obscures their presence. Colors, taste, and the feel of warm streams—all hidden in the landscape—are described in this verse in iconographic snapshot-like form (a distinctive style in early Irish Sea texts), as if flickers of sunlight in a grove, not objectifiably perceptible in any naturalistic tableau fixed in a triumphal sequence of linear time culminating in the human present. The darkness effected by ancestral sin (absolutely objectifying nature, in Irigaray's terms) places such wonders of landscape beyond human ken, although they are fully openable again (by implication of the "retro" narrative) in the Incarnation to come. Hidden by objectifying sin, this "in-between" landscape is accessed by poetry and embedded in topographic narrative, suggesting the paradoxical tangibility of its hiddenness.

5. *Places of Temptation and Mire in Landscape*

Beyond experience of situated blindness in apophatic landscape, the encountering of difference in place as difficulty and trial in *Tochmarc Étaíne* highlights the allure and the risk of objectifying one's own self or others, and of trying to control people, place, or region. Yet experience of difficulty in the story when placed in larger contexts of landscape (of a region as event) becomes the challenge of rebirth and transformation in place through rhizomic connections and dimensions. Experience of landscape as a process of challenge is thus associated with abjection, or horror at crossing borders of identity, often configured negatively in modern Western cultures in relation to birth, the feminine, and the pre-linguistic,⁸⁴ but for Deleuze and Guattari identified with creative and relational desire, and for early medieval apophatic Christian theology with the divine. This paradox of identifying abjection in landscape with liminality and otherness necessary for environmental self-realization contextualizes several elements of *Tochmarc Étaíne*: Efforts to win, control, or eliminate Étaín; Midir's loss of her; her failures to realize her connection with the Otherworld (as in her involvement with her brother-in-law Aillil); and Eochaid's failure again to distinguish either

the Otherworld from “his” realm or Étaín from his daughter. Étaín’s history with Midir suggests in this context a necessity for both to grow into a balance between the Otherworld and the human. The story presents the literally life-and-death challenges of doing so in Étaín’s travails. Her passivity and implicit endurance ultimately can be read from a landscape perspective as iconic of the empowering potential of place-as-event. This is fulfilled in partnership with Midir at the end, accompanied presumably by her full transformation into an otherworldly being, her ultimate rebirth.

The balance between the Otherworld and the human is almost immediately violated in the story, evoking abjection in the conflict incurred by Midir’s bringing Étaín home in disrespect of his previous wife, a druid exercising powers of sorcery in retaliation. Óengus, the divine youth, again must rescue Étaín, as he had done from her father’s possessiveness earlier. Midir (whose name has been taken to mean “judgment”⁸⁵) here seems immature in wisdom and power, in need of learning empathy, an unworthy partner for a Sovereignty goddess who herself seems maturing with him until the story’s end. The transformation of Étaín into a fly indeed is a twist on the usual change of the Sovereignty figure from a hag into a beautiful maiden. As Eichhorn-Mulligan writes, “In the myth of sacral kingship and investment of power, the ruler gains the position of primacy only after the sexual demands of the monstrous or unruly body, the loathly lady, have been heeded and she has regained the ideal, beautiful form of the lovely lady.”⁸⁶ Yet Étaín’s transformation into an animal involves intensified otherworldly beauty and healing powers, in a less objectifiable and more nonhuman yet natural form, nurtured by Óengus’ divine care. When she is reborn yet again, despite many trials, the ultimate effect is a transformation of the human landscape, exposing the flaws and incompleteness of the high kingship in Ireland before Christ. Yet in larger regional connections, experiencing the landscape’s alternate temporalities, such “mired” places as events in the narrative are reconfigured as transformative. In a sense this parallels again the early apophatic Christian notion that our sense of what God *is not* is in a sense closer to the divine (or ultimate reality) than our sense of that which *is* God, both forming a double-folded experiential landscape of salvation.

Seasonal festivals around the early Irish Sea (themselves Otherworld-related, as discussed in the next chapter) linked traditions of the Mother of God involving purification of abjection to goddess holidays probably symbolizing earth’s fertility, especially in August festivals of Lughnasa and the Assumption/Dormition that overlapped with the Feast of Transfiguration.⁸⁷ Also associated with harvest, the latter commemorates a manifestation of Jesus’ incarnate divinity amid uncreated energies on earth, during the Jewish Feast of the Tabernacles (itself commemorating life in the desert), when otherworldly light and a voice from heaven threw Jesus’ closest disciples to the ground, presaging the Crucifixion-Resurrection.⁸⁸ The August tabernacle-related harvest holidays (associated with the God-bearer Mary as the living tabernacle of God associated with earth) marked a confluence between the New Testament emphasis on the body as a temple of the Holy Spirit and that in Genesis 1 on the earth as transfigurationally fulfilled by the Holy Spirit. The Otherworld emerges from native tradition into

literacy in the middle space between those two images, a middle space of both bodily abjection and transformation.

The “prehistoric” experience of difference in place within *Tochmarc Étaíne* is abjective for some characters and transformative for others. In Étaín’s second life, a new series of transformations of the land (after those of her earlier bride-price) seems to mark the establishment of a mature marriage or partnership between her and Midir, in the tasks performed by him for Eochaid. Midir leads the fulfillment of these tasks himself, not as earlier through a divine proxy. Her discussions with him can be interpreted as choosing him over Eochaid. But Midir’s shaping an apparent landscape of power for the high king end in a catastrophe for Eochaid, which sets the limit of human sovereignty over the land in anticipation of the coming of Christ. Eochaid and his warriors are left in the literal mire of their attempted digging up of the mounds, and figuratively in the mire of Eochaid’s incestuous union with his daughter. To possess a region by knowing, as Eochaid attempts, is to try to shape universal space and time that disrupt the natural magic that is the energy of place.

Temptation and abjection situate readers on the cusp between experiencing nonbeing as part of nature, as Eriugena suggested (in effect an acceptance of the Otherworld), or as evil, as Augustine emphasized. This involves a choice between experiencing desire as lack, or desire as creatively shaping the real in rebirth as in the swan scene near the end of the story, in which air and sky extend the dimensions of the hidden otherworldiness of Temair’s mounds. Eochaid in desiring both Étaín and power experiences desire as lack and nonbeing as unnatural. He loses both Étaín and the certainty of succession he desires. He commits incest, a sin of homogeneity, in failing to realize the gathering of difference inherent in place. Because Étaín empathetically was open to helping her brother-in-law, even Dún Frémaid (the location of their would-be trysts) as a potential place of sin or disloyalty is transformed into a redemptive place of reunion with her real husband, Midir. Marriage in that story of reunion, *à la Berry*, is a place of quasi-ecological as well as of personal realization, or, in other words, a region. If Midir’s background in the mythological beginnings of the story is initially positioned as inadequate in this respect, his persistent commitment to Étaín across centuries earned (finally with her implicit assent) a relationship with Sovereignty and the land that was not objectifying. They fly off not to his mound but to a mound associated with imaginative desire in poetry. While experience of place as temptation and mire articulates a potentially moral sense of landscape at odds with modern scientific views of nature, abject place as a potentially transformative region informs recognition of the balance between the organism’s will and ecological context: a synergy of free will and grace that shapes an environmental theophany.

6. Potential for Displacement

Without relationality, the story suggests, human beings are isolated in a universality of space and time, points cut off from region. This makes displacements inevitable as various characters grow or atrophy. But in the end all of Ireland

itself is also in a sense displaced in dynamic relationality in its own landscape, by the impending fall of the fantasy high kingship and the implicitly anticipated arrival of Christianity (mirroring expectation of the Second Coming by the tale's contemporary audience). The monastic ideal of "being in place" combined with exile or unworldliness exemplifies this paradox, as voiced by both John Climacus' classic seventh-century *Ladder of Divine Ascent* written in the Sinai desert ca. 600, and by Adomnán's Hiberno-Latin *Vita S. Columbae*, ca. 700, from the western islands of Scotland. This ethos of relational displacement is embodied in the double-enveloped landscape of the Otherworld trope. Its mirrorings of worlds echo the biblical aerial and earthly waters of Creation, subverting objectivity of place as well as of person. This displacement within landscape is signified both by the departure of Midir and Étaín from Temair in flying nonhuman form, and Eochaid's failed effort as high king to define his realm himself.⁸⁹ Such creative displacement embodies the spatial causality of the Otherworld—being-in-place that is also being-out-of-place. As such it also parallels Heidegger's dynamic sense of *logos* as *phusis* or half-hidden movement, the melding of *logos* and *phusis* having much in common with Eriugena's *Periphyseon*.⁹⁰ In that ecological gathering, the nature of things remains an experience of mystery, and that experience in movement forms a region.

7. *Warping of Space/Time in Place*

Space and time ultimately are not universals in the story, but place-based in moments of relational experience that form a regional landscape. As Carey notes, "the Otherworld is an eternity which lies beyond, but at the same time determines, the mortal realities of life and death."⁹¹ In terms of the potential for a dynamic relationship with nature to subvert human oppression, the liminal-yet-central Otherworld associated with the Sovereignty goddess can be read in light of Kristeva's notion of a cyclical "women's time," akin to Kohák's overlapping modes of "natural time" and existential eternity. Kristeva's women's time emanates from a pre-linguistic semiotic realm in cycles associated with maternity and fertility, all commonly opposed to linear temporalities in Western cultures and evoking a landscape of process rather than objects.⁹² Such associations of femaleness with nature, common in many societies, are often problematic or oppressive, but also potentially subversive of male hierarchy in ecofeminist approaches privileging nature as infused with the divine.⁹³ They perhaps could serve in early archipelagic contexts as a reminder of Paul's words that there is neither male nor female in Christ, while also potentially adding an Irigarayan element of sexual difference to landscape through the warping of time and space.

Étaín's rebirth, 1,012 years after her earlier life, and not long before the coming of Christ, intersects with Midir's return to her, as he recites to her verses about the Otherworld and the calamitous effects of their reunion arguably form a prologue to the coming of Christ. We can see here the interweaving of different temporalities enfolding space, or what environmental phenomenologist David Wood calls "time-plexity" forming ecological experience as a region.⁹⁴ Wood argues that such warping of space and time in ecopoetic narrative integrates (through

active memory and extension of the lived body into ecoregion) the physical world as cause with human consciousness as intention. Thus humans grant subjectivity to nature while recognizing the strangeness of its otherness. The result is an iconographic “middle ground of relationality, a space neither governed by simple causality nor by simple intentionality.”⁹⁵ In Evan Thompson’s work in neurophenomenology, the human mind subjectively synchronizes experience, while larger networks of place in engagement with that environmental mind de-synchronize it simultaneously. This continual back-and-forth shapes the human mind as a type of landscape beyond the brain, which forms Thompson’s empathetic model for ecological human development.⁹⁶ Narrative (as in patristic *logoi* or Otherworld tales) can refocus perception from centering on organism to a larger landscape.⁹⁷

Memory remains crucial to this environmental functioning of narrative as region. It apprehends something absent “through the activity of re-presenting an experience believed to have occurred in the past,” as Thompson describes it. That active “re-presenting” of experience can take on spatial and external aspects. For Thompson, the process includes “a kind of doubling of consciousness...the conscious re-presentation of a past occurrence [and] the conscious re-presentation of a previous consciousness.” Memory thus overlays the awareness of external experience with a sense of multiple frameworks of time that emerge from the situation remembered.⁹⁸ Such double re-presentation of both physical experience and memory is akin to engagement with iconography, the double-foldedness of the Otherworld as landscape, and the synergetic imagination that Eriugena sees as integral to theophany-fantasy. The potential for the subject to engage imaginatively in a doubled consciousness, and thus with multiple environmental frameworks, stimulates the developmental empathy that Thompson deems necessary to self-realization.⁹⁹

“Ecocentric” textuality implicates the mortality of human experience in a mix of alternate cyclical temporality, regional landscape, and frameworks of multiple dialogues. The latter parallel the dialogic writing highlighted by Mikhail Bakhtin in Fyodor Dostoevsky’s novels, but with intensified topographical and earth-related, nonhuman aspects.¹⁰⁰ We can encounter such an early environmentally dialogic sense of text, in connection with the scriptural milieu of early Irish Sea literary cultures, by re-translating Greek *logos* unconventionally but accurately in the opening of John’s gospel, in a sense that Maximus and Eriugena (and probably other early Irish cosmographers) would have understood: “In the beginning was the Discourse, and the Discourse was with God, and the Discourse was God, the same was in the beginning with God.” Matter reflects the *logoi*, which are both transcendent and immanent energies, and thus both in the landscape and shaping it.

The related Otherworld trope in effect refigures Lévinas’ ambiguously numinous speaking “face” as iconographic landscape in text. In early texts of the Irish Sea zone, face-to-face encounters occur narratively within relational landscape between humans, nonhumans, and even nonbeings—heavenly spirits exalted and fallen, otherworldly beings, topography, and the sea. Language, which Lévinas saw as necessary to establish an absolute moral responsibility in relation

to the face, is inherent in the Otherworld. This is so not only in the language ability, poetry, and music attributed to its inhabitants, and in its structure as a realm of the imagination within textual narrative, but even more in the very cosmic language of the Maximian *logoi* or energies behind Eriugena's cosmology, which forms a kind of ultimate process of ecopoiesis analogous to the trope. That energy-language shapes a participative warping of space and time. In it, earth becomes an experiential icon of the divine, a participating virtual real as opposed to an actual objectification, to put it in terms of Deleuze and Guattari. As a regional iconographic landscape, *Tochmarc Étaíne* reminds us of why icons traditionally are said to be "written," not drawn.

Map 2: *Y Mabinogi*, Reading the Otherworld as Textual Region

The *Mabinogi*,¹⁰¹ as a fourfold pattern of stories with explicitly Christian and native layers related both to topography and an early anticolonialism, presents a different but complementary "way in" to the Otherworld as a quasi-environmental trope. *Pedeir Keinc y Mabinogi*, or "Four Branches of the *Mabinogi*" (a modern designation), were composed in extant form on the British side of the Irish Sea, probably in the early twelfth century, most likely at the native monastery of Clas Beuno in Clynog Fawr or one of its dependencies, based on place-name evidence in the stories.¹⁰² Carey in a recent study convincingly argues for "pervasive Irish influence on the composition of the first three Branches of the *Mabinogi*," through texts that probably came from Ireland to Wales in the ninth century, roughly contemporary to Eriugena and perhaps to original versions of *Tochmarc Étaíne* and the core of *Táin Bó Cúailnge*.¹⁰³ "The Welsh bards may have seen the Irish scholars as being in some sense their predecessors," Carey writes. "They may have drawn freely on what was remembered of what these men had brought with them," subsequently re-weaving it with the Welsh landscape in "a spirit of intellectual self-assertion" by the North Walian literary culture of Gwynedd.¹⁰⁴ This may have been a kind of returned favor, in that Ireland was thought to have received literacy and Christianity centuries before from the Romano-Celtic culture in Britain to which the Welsh claimed a direct connection.

The Four Branches in extant form probably were compiled around the same time as extant manuscripts of the *Táin*, and the *Táin* and the *Mabinogi* arguably form together the two most extensive works in the early Irish Sea Otherworld corpus. Both the Welsh cycle and the Ulster Cycle as a whole are similarly vested in landscape and related themes from the region. And both the *Mabinogi* and the *Táin* present culturally foundational "retro" narratives that resist aspects of rising Western European culture in the twelfth century, while drawing on combined native and cosmopolitan themes in a tight entanglement of place and imagination. In the *Mabinogi*, text constitutes Wales and vice versa. As the Celticist John K. Bollard notes, the *Mabinogi* as a "written work is both drawn from and remains part of the very soil of the country...not romantic in any simple sense...both down-to-earth and evocative of the unseen," making it "hard to differentiate at times whether the countryside is an embodiment of these tales or

the tales are an explanation of the land itself.”¹⁰⁵ “The landscape sees,” as Deleuze and Guattari put it.¹⁰⁶ As Goodchild glosses that statement, the texts wrestle “from perception of the object and states of the perceiving subject . . . a percept that belongs to matter itself [in which] percepts are the moments of vision that constitute the world” (percept being defined as “a revelation of another mode of being”).¹⁰⁷ The cycle unfolds a landscape-narrative of Wales that can still be followed on foot and tracked on maps of western Britain. But there are other layers to it as well: Old Celtic gods glimpsed in human characters, aforementioned Irish influences, and overlays to the Otherworld landscape, which link the stories to cosmic cycles of early Christianity as well.

The Four Branches are sometimes read (based on interpretations of the term *Mabinogi* found within them) as a mythic cycle of the “divine youth” Mabon or Maponos (seen as mythically and linguistically cognate with Mac ind Óc in *Tochmarc Étaíne*), and the term is also extant in a later medieval text describing the youth of Christ.¹⁰⁸ But they are also linked by the structure of the text to the landscape of Wales. In these narratives, which Matthew Arnold condescendingly defined as confused rubble of a ruined mythological system,¹⁰⁹ analogues between Christian cosmological templates and mythic foundational tales alternate between south and north Wales in a liminal time straddling the coming of Christianity. The texts gather lore and doctrines of Irish Sea cultures, associated with the land, in what probably was also a narrative act of resistance against encroaching Norman colonial domination and ecclesiastical control.¹¹⁰ In the cycle, a landscape of Wales, in dialogue with the landscape of a larger retrospectively remembered Celtic Britain, becomes the central character. The human is embedded in this landscape, shaped by contractual relationship with a larger nature that enfolds and includes it.

Like *Tochmarc Étaíne*, the segments making up the extant text each can be read as revolving around the Celtic trope of the Sovereignty goddess of the land, with a similar land ethic of contractual, experiential, and multidimensional relations, set in a manifest hiddenness of nonbeing. But, as is argued here, they also participate in a type of Christian iconography associated with gospel narrative and ascetic practice, through parallels in the Four Branches to Gregory the Great’s popular early medieval fourfold schema of life, also known as his “tetramorph.”¹¹¹ Gregory had linked the four symbols of the evangelists with four phases of the cosmic Christological cycle (Incarnation, Crucifixion, Resurrection, Ascension) and four virtues of Christian life (reason, sacrifice, composure, contemplation) also as we shall see paralleling Eriugena’s fourfold cosmic cycle with its echoes of Maximus. The result is a dynamic iconographic landscape of Wales that fuses fantasy topology and topography into a relational sense of region, which, compiled in extant form at the time of the Norman Conquest, resists objectification by human gaze and control.

The Native Landscape of the *Mabinogi*

Native and Irish-related landscape associations focus the whole cycle. The initial meeting (outside of the Otherworld) of Rhiannon and Pwyll of Dyfed involves

inculcating a lesson of respect for a Sovereignty figure. Rhiannon bears symbolic associations with an ancient Celtic horse-fertility goddess, including her apparent relation to an otherworldly mound-portal at Arberth, a place name probably derived from “by the grove,” likely to have been associated with a pre-Christian sacred oak grove at such a mound.¹¹² The text also may link her with a goddess-like cycle of yearly birth, with her perhaps being the Otherworld ruler Arawn’s unnamed wife earlier in the story, whom Pwyll had successfully met and respected in his earlier foray into that realm.¹¹³ The end achievement of the coming together of Pwyll (associated with the sea through names of his shadow or alter-ego figures, Teyrnnon Twf Uliant, and Rhiannon’s subsequent husband Manawydan, both of whom seem mythically to complete Pwyll’s character¹¹⁴) and Rhiannon (a goddess of the land) is the birth of their son Pryderi, whose name means “thought” or “care.” In Pryderi rests the covenant with the land that then is finally broken toward the end of the cycle, only to be potentially restored through Lleu’s unifying rule. Pwyll’s name, ironically given his misjudgments, means something like “common sense,” which fits also the first virtue of reason in Gregory the Great’s fourfold model, as we shall see. Thus, perhaps, there is also a sense in the narrative of the integration of Otherworld and this-world as merging the affective with the rational, or a grounding of reason in the land. Reason, associated with the sea as a trope of imagination by Eriugena,¹¹⁵ marries the earth, who gives birth to a caring or compassionate thought, Pryderi’s name being related in the story to Rhiannon’s care. This perhaps echoes the early desert monastic goal of getting the mind into the heart, appropriate for native *clasau* known for hermit-ascetics and scholarship,¹¹⁶ and fitting the intricacies of early medieval mythography.¹¹⁷

The Second and Third branches of the cycle likewise focus on relational-contractual engagement with the land. In the second tale, this relation is broken when Branwen is disrespected in an arranged marriage to the king of Ireland amid inter-dynastic feuding, resulting in a disastrous war. Her words, before she dies of a literally broken heart, express how the two islands turned wasteland as a result: *Da a dwy ynys a diffeithwyd o’m achaws i* (“Two good islands have been laid waste because of me”).¹¹⁸ (An earlier disrespecting of Rhiannon in the last section of the First Branch seems to foreshadow Branwen’s fate as another apparent Sovereignty figure facing oppression.) Her brother Brân’s sacrificial offering of his head as a protection for the island of Britain arguably restores a reciprocally relational landscape between the Otherworld and the human world.¹¹⁹ (Brân in the text is called Bendigeidfran, or “Brân the blessed,” the short form being used here.) The Second Branch also conveys as it were a glimpse of an older primordial layer of legend associated with the land, that of a cauldron of rebirth with its grail analogues, and how disrespect shown by the Irish King Matholwch to the giants associated with the cauldron (Matholwch then later disrespecting Branwen as well) contrasts with the respect shown to the giants by Brân, which results in the mixing of their warrior race productively across his realm. The Irish king Matholwch’s later use of the cauldron as a war technology, without any sense of balance with the Otherworld, results in its destruction amid fractious violence that devastates the two islands, leading into the wasteland of the Third Branch.

In the Third Branch, an enchantment devastates the kingdom of Dyfed in South Wales, resulting from Pwyll's earlier lack of wisdom in caring for the land as embodied by Rhiannon, which had sparked a bitter feud. The resulting wasteland, an unnatural "natural" land without human habitation, perhaps echoes expansion of intensified feudal farming by the Normans in southern Wales contemporary with composition of the cycle (even as Rhiannon's trials in the First Branch involving motherhood also may foreshadow anachronistically the obsession of Norman feudalism with primogeniture, in male concern with a royal heir). Manawydan reverses the illusion, which had been brought on by the type of native fractious feuding that had left Welsh culture vulnerable to conquest, through a combination of his own cultivating of wheat on the land, and a single-minded devotion to bringing back a landscape including human community, which suggests a native vision of a natural connection between human habitation, ecology, and region.

Creative engagement with the Otherworld seemed to have vanished with the people, perhaps into the magic castle into which Rhiannon and Pryderi have been taken captive, meant to prefigure also perhaps the appearance of Norman castles built to pacify and cordon off Wales. Manawydan works out an elaborate and literal mousetrap for the enchanter who had enacted the curse on the land, whose troop takes on the shape of mice to consume Manawydan's crop. This darkly comic routine echoes Augustine's popularly known adage that the crucifixion was the devil's mousetrap.¹²⁰ The enchanter himself, who with his followers also impersonate Christian church figures, is acting from motives of vengeance stemming from a feud involving Pryderi's father, highlighting a weakness in native culture and a vision of its consequences. Manawydan patiently watches for three nights, traps the magical mice, and resurrects the land of Dyfed and his family. The phantom clerics who also appear during the enchantment (or vision) perhaps type another consequence of Norman domination, namely a new centralized ecclesiastical order at odds with native establishments.

The Fourth Branch involves a theme of the return of the right ruler to the land, specifically to the land of Gwynedd in the north of Wales, which at the time of the cycle's probable composition would have been seen as the main hope for a revived and unified Wales. Lleu first escapes death by flying away as an eagle, then is restored to his form as ruler through a contemplative recital of poetry. There is in this an element of return paralleling that of cosmic tetrychal schemes such as Gregory's, in which (as will be discussed further in the next two sections) the fourth and last phase is associated with an eagle, with Christ's Ascension and Second Coming (as Christ ascends, so shall he return), and with contemplation as a type of participation in a cosmic return. (Eriugena's fourth phase of nature involves the return of Creation to God.¹²¹) However, Lleu's triumph is marred by the memory of loss and absence, including the loss of his "artificial" wife, an anti-Sovereignty figure of male objectification gone awry. Implicit in mindfulness of loss throughout the *Mabinogi* (most notably at the end of the Second Branch) is the loss of most of Britain to the Anglo-Saxons and now Anglo-Normans. This loss was answered, as it was for Christian cultures of the Eastern Mediterranean vis-à-vis Arab-Islamic conquests, in an iconographically

fractal—almost ecological, in its relational ethos—sense of landscape and of the world. In such ecopoetic imagination, as in the ethico-aesthetic model of Deleuze and Guattari, “art rediscovers the infinite through the finite object that it fashions, restoring the infinite [immanent otherworldly] as a principle of composition.”¹²²

A God on a Tree in the Fourth Branch

In the penultimate scene of the extant *Mabinogi* cycle, we see an act of cosmic magic in the landscape suggest the environmental power of the larger dynamic context of the Otherworld. Lleu (Llew) Llaw Gyffes (“fair skillful-hand,” great-nephew of Gwynedd’s ruler Math, brother of the goddess Don) has been ritually killed by the lover of Lleu’s wife, whom Lleu’s uncles had created for him from flowers. Lleu is transformed, as he is dying, into an eagle who comes to rest atop an oak tree in a desolate glen bearing his name, described in terminology evocative of a pagan sacred sanctuary.¹²³ He returns to human form only after listening to poetry that links him to the land. His location is revealed by the actions of an otherworldly swine to Lleu’s foster (and possibly biological) father, his uncle the sorcerer Gwydion. A reference to “Lleu’s flowers” in the poetry recited by Gwydion seems to prefigure Lleu’s restoration by a kind of natural magic effected by the *englyn* stanzas, contrasted with earlier magic in the story.¹²⁴ The verses express a grief grounded in landscape, which is both creatively apophatic (emphasizing the hiddenness of nonbeing) and self-emptying (as in the *kenosis* stressed in Maximian-Eriugenian cosmology). It implicitly contrasts with the glamorously unnatural and objectifying magic that had shaped his former wife from flowers. Here natural magic is empathy that places Lleu back into the landscape.

Dar a dyf y rwng deu lenn,
Gorduwrych awyr a glenn.
Ony dywedaf i eu,
O ulodeu Llew ban yw hynn.

Dar a dyf yn ard uaes,
Nis gwlych glaw, nis mwy tawd,
Naw ugein angerd a borthes
Yn y blaen, Llew Llaw Gyffes.

Dar a dyf dan anwaeret,
Mirein modur yn nywet.
Ony dywedaf i [eu],
Ef dydau Llew y’m arfet.¹²⁵

[An oak grows between two lakes,
Very dark sky and glen;
Unless I speak falsehood,
From Lleu’s flowers this comes.

An oak grows on high open land,
Rain soaks it no more than melting.
Nine-score hardships it succored
In its summit, Llew Llaw Gyffes.

An oak grows on a slope,
 Bright prince in sanctuary;
 Unless I speak falsehood,
 Lleu will come into my lap.]¹²⁶

In prose frames between each of these *englyn* verses, Lleu, in eagle form, comes closer to Gwydion who sings the *englynion*. In the end, Lleu finally comes into the lap of the sorcerer. Gwydion, tapping him with his magic wand, restores him by a last act of magic that finally is natural in empathy, restoring Lleu to his “own form,” *yn y rith e hunan*, speaking no lie, contextualizing him in a relational landscape rather than seeking to fashion a differentiated identity (and wife) for him to possess again. This reintegrates Lleu with his family and society, and with a relational identity of which he has been deprived through earlier objectifying sorceries. The latter perhaps were meant to foreshadow in their effects the rhetorical-scholastic magic of an incoming Norman colonial culture with castles, centralizing church, feudal farming, and emphasis on individual subjectivity.

The “new Western European order” was closing down native *clasau* associated with composition of the cycle, replacing them with continental-based “franchise” monastery operations, while dotting Wales with castles such as the dangerous one in the Third Branch. The cycle associated England with hostile urban landscapes of commercialism, its people envious of the naturally magical craftsmanship of native heroes. The story’s presentation of magic could reflect distrust of a growing commercial paradigm of nature, allied to an intensified sense of human interiority emerging in Western Europe by the twelfth century. Such “new magic” included too adoption of the high-medieval rearticulation of the Trinity as a symbol of human psychology and desire.¹²⁷ In this new cultural semiotic, nature—marginalized with women and native peoples—arguably became a more instrumentalist symbolism, subject to “magical” Scholastic manipulation. Such “unnatural” magic had contributed to the events leading up to Lleu’s woes.¹²⁸

Meanwhile, Pryderi, the central mythic human figure of the cycle, had broken an earlier covenant between himself and his land regarding the pigs that had come from the Otherworld—*ammot y ref a’m gwlat amdanunt* [a covenant between me and my land about them].¹²⁹ He had given up the swine to the scheming Gwydion and Gilfaethwy of Gwynedd as a result of their illusory sorcery, which had set up what in effect was a type of commercial exchange prefiguring the new economic order portrayed in England in the Third Branch. Pryderi traded the swine to them for twelve steeds, twelve black white-breasted hunting dogs, twelve collars with leashes on them seeming to be gold, and twelve gold saddles and bridles. All of Pryderi’s profits, however, turn out to be illusion. The war he waged as a result led to his death by more of Gwydion’s illusions. Throughout the final story of the *Mabinogi* cycle, such magic disrespects land-goddess figures, dismisses bonds between human beings and the landscape, and erodes ties between human beings and the native Otherworld permeating that landscape. Gwydion and Gilfaethwy themselves earlier were involved in raping Goewin, the virgin companion to Math, the ruler of Gwynedd. Goewin in that role

seemed to have been fulfilling a mythic function of Sovereignty. Gwydion and Gilfaethwy had sought to hide that crime with the war that led to Pryderi's fall.

In the verses that bring Lleu back into his own form by situating him in a landscape, by contrast, there arguably is an iconographic melding of experience of the otherworldly, the natural, and the human. The effect is analogous to what the Russian poet Olga Sedokova describes of iconographic nature: "The image is mingled with the landscape: the landscape is filled with the image."¹³⁰ This iconographic engagement is coupled with themes and symbolism evocative both of pagan and biblical traditions. In the verses chanted by Gwydion, as scholars note, *yn nywet* appears to emend a term cognate with the Gaulish *nemeton* and Latin *nemus*, a sanctuary or clearing in a wood, evoking Classical references to the Galatian Celtic center of *Drunemeton*, "oak sanctuary," and Old Irish *nemed*, which includes meanings of "sanctuary" and "sacred place."¹³¹

In this final branch of the cycle, a tree becomes a kind of "wormhole" or Otherworld portal in effect, together with the mound and otherworldly islands (with the sea) of the earlier stories. The image of the cosmic tree is familiar from both pagan and biblical sources of the era, and more rhizomic than the types of vertical *axis mundi* privileged as a world-model in dominant high-medieval thought. Its branches, roots, and complex organic dimensions in early traditions of Europe's Atlantic islands exemplify the difference with identity, the appearing with hiding, of archipelagic nature. In Irish traditions, the salmon of wisdom (a figure seen also in the early Welsh tale *Culhwch ac Olwen*) gains the wisdom of Creation through eating the nuts of nine hazel trees by a well associated with the sea, and sacred trees are mentioned in connection with early Irish Christian communities.¹³² A poem celebrating a battle of personified trees, *Kat Godeu*, is attributed to the legendary early Welsh poet Taliesin.¹³³ In the First Branch of the *Mabinogi*, the name of the mound Arberth ("by the grove") again suggests the presence of an otherworldly mound with a sacred oak grove. One motif of Celtic origin (adapted into a medieval grail romance) involves an exile in a tree recognized through a cryptic poem.¹³⁴ Early Irish law testifies to sacred trees at monastic and secular sites.¹³⁵ And Germanic traditions of northwest Europe associate drippings from the cosmic tree with wisdom.¹³⁶

In addition, analogues to biblical traditions of a tree associated with the Trinity,¹³⁷ the Tree of Life in Paradise, and the Cross as a tree attest the significance of the image in ancient landscape symbolism, exemplified by the Old English poem *Dream of the Rood* (touched on further in chapter six). St. John of Damascus in the eighth century termed the biblical Tree of Life "divine thought that has its origin in the world of sense, and the ascent through that to the originating and constructive cause of all," adding that this was the name God gave to every tree.¹³⁸ His explication draws on the Greek Septuagint text, which translates as "All-tree" what usually in English is rendered "every tree." Eriugena's Greek patristic sources relate that meaning in Genesis to Christ, as does his own exegesis discussed in the next chapter.¹³⁹ Eriugena's source Maximus also uses the image of the All-tree to express the combined transcendence and immanence of the *logoi* of the *Logos*. Maximus writes the *logoi* are like birds on the branches of the Tree of Life that is the *Logos*, grown from the mustard seed of faith; the *logoi*

of intelligible beings are compared to the blood, and the *logoi* of sensible things to the flesh, of the *Logos*-Tree.¹⁴⁰ The theological writer Dumitru Stăniloae, drawing on Greek patristic and iconographic views related to early desert asceticism, described the tree symbol in words reminiscent of the notion in *Tochmarc Étaíne* that the Otherworld is everywhere though hidden to unredeemed mortals (just as perhaps all networks and relations of a tree above- and belowground are not visible from any one perspective):

The fact that the tree of life is said to have remained somewhere from which humans have been removed may mean that in itself the world remained potentially a tree of life and potentially transparent, but that men had fallen away from knowing it in this way... St. Symeon the New Theologian, for example, described the order of eternal life, which he saw in part even in this life, in colors of unutterable beauty and harmony. We can say that it is precisely those who cling exclusively to the [un-relational and objectified] surface of creation who lose the vision of its profundity in God, who lose the world as tree of life and as chalice inviting us to take the immortal divine life...¹⁴¹

There also is patristic association of the figure of the eagle (associated in the story with the tree and Christ symbolism) with establishment of the reign of the Church, paralleling Roman imperial symbolism.¹⁴² All this can form an analogue, in the context of the *Mabinogi* as a whole, to Lleu's reestablishment (when he comes down from the tree) of a reign over the remnant of a lost Romano-Celtic Britain in Gwynedd, a microcosm of an ancient native culture with deep-rooted Christian roots in the land.¹⁴³ The North Walian elite claimed identity with that cultural prototype amid the fragmented state of Welsh polities. The narrative landscape, like the cosmic tree, provided a context of healing and survival, with the *Mabinogi*'s constituent tales themselves called "branches."

The Christian Landscape of the *Mabinogi*

Other landscape associations in the Fourth Branch entwine Christian and native traditions, in an experience of difference as place-region. Lleu's cognate deity, the Irish god Lug, is associated with his mother's festival at Lughnasa in August, which parallels important Christian feasts related to Christ and the God-bearer Mary. Lleu's reinstatement to rulership in Gwynedd, within the internal dating of the cycle, would be around the time of the traditional early coming of Christianity to Britain, to which Gildas' foundational Cambro-Latin account gave solar associations.¹⁴⁴ (While earlier scholarship incorrectly identified Lug's name with that of a solar deity, the Welsh form Lleu means "shining" and could relate to purported associations of Lug with lightning.¹⁴⁵) The story presents a dying Lleu associated with a tree from which he is resurrected, as an historical human figure with mysterious paternity. Lleu at the end is in a sense a Christ figure typologically, but in the "retro" cultural frame of the texts still a tragically limited pagan figure. He lacks the association with Sovereignty goddess or the Mother of God found in early medieval Christian notions of cosmic kingship,¹⁴⁶ having subdued the land successfully but being without a relational contract to

the earth. This echoes the ending of the *Táin*. There, too, human efforts to control the land fail, Sovereignty is out of balance, and the situation implicitly points toward fulfillment in Christian incarnationism.

This is where a third *schema* for reading the *Mabinogi* is discernible, entwined with those of the landscape of Wales including the Otherworld, and relations with the Sovereignty goddess: a fourfold Christian cosmic framework. Fourfold interpretations of life abound in medieval culture, in which four was identified with the cosmic: four gospels, four elements, four humors, four seasons, four primary limbs of human beings, four directions, Eriugena's fourfold cosmography, and so on. Insular gospel books particularly celebrated the four gospels in visual art. Perhaps the most famous and widely circulated of fourfold schemes in the West in the early Middle Ages was Gregory the Great's early medieval tetrych of Christian images. Gregory related symbols of four creatures from Ezekiel's prophecies to the gospels and Revelation, correlating human and animal symbols of the Evangelists with virtues and phases of Christ's experience on earth. These were the birth of a man-child (perfect reason, the Incarnation of the *Logos*), the sacrifice of a beast of burden (the sacrifice of mortification, the Crucifixion), a lion (fortitude through composure, the Resurrection), and an eagle (contemplation, the Ascension; this also being a symbol-theme in Eriugena's homily on the prologue to John's Gospel).¹⁴⁷ In terms of the four phases of the *Mabinogi*, the sequence correlates with the birth of Pryderi as a "divine son" figure of Welsh myth and Pwyll's learning of commonsense to match his name; Brân's sacrifice of his own head to protect the land; Manawydan's cat-like "mousetrap" role in resurrecting the land of Dyfed from its wasteland enchantment (analogous again to the medieval trope of the Crucifixion-Resurrection being the devil's mousetrap¹⁴⁸); and Lleu's soaring as an eagle and, in effect, contemplation of landscape in bardic verse. Lleu's restoration, in what is described as a second establishment of power, again perhaps types Christ's Second Coming as the return implicit in the Ascension.

Together with this sequence of thematic symbolism, the geographic patterning of the *Mabinogi* also reflects the pattern of spatial directions in Gregory's fourfold. The Four Branches in alternating association with the south and north of Wales sequentially are related to the four phases of Christology and virtue associated by Gregory with the alternation of the right hand and the left hand, respectively, the early Welsh terms for "south" and "north" being the same as for "right" and "left." In the right-left-right-up pattern of Gregory's model is seen an analogue to the south-north-south-north pattern of the directional orientation of the *Mabinogi* branches. The final story is related to Gwynedd's implied position of transcendence, figuring the hoped-for ascendancy of the north in opposition to Anglo-Norman rule, and thus transcending the directions as does Gregory's fourth phase. (This geographic fourfold in Welsh tradition also finds a near-contemporary analogue in Snorri Sturluson's thirteenth-century description of an Icelandic tetramorph of parallel creatures.¹⁴⁹)

A typological association of Brân's head with Christ also resonates with what John Carey has noted of a probable Irish origin for the Welsh Brân and core motifs of his story, connected with themes of the medieval grail cycle, the latter

being linked both to the Christian Eucharist and a wasteland landscape motif. In Irish stories with native themes, a figure named Brân is involved in a disastrous raid on the Otherworld, taking a treasure from female guardians, resulting in a wasteland, although in *Immram Brain* this figure, Bran mac Febail, is received happily by the sea god Manannán Mac Lir (a name cognate with that of Brân's brother in the *Mabinogi*) in another temporality—a Paradise-like Otherworld also with feminine associations.¹⁵⁰ Dichotomous (and in a sense ecological) themes, paralleled in the *Mabinogi*, of the danger of disrespecting the Otherworld, and the joys of respectful participation in it, became fused with Christian elements in continental fashionings of the grail cycle that begin to appear in the twelfth century. Earlier grail-related themes include the Irish trope of a human visitor to the Otherworld, upon whom a female guardian voluntarily bestows vessels of the ale of kingship, leading to a successful reign. Both aspects of this complex of landscape-sovereignty stories come together arguably in the Second Branch, as Carey notes. There otherworldly feasting with Brân's head follows a disastrous war in Ireland (brought on by feuding among dynasties) that lays waste to it and Britain.¹⁵¹

The stories are oriented in a particular Christian temporality centered on the land. Historic associations of names in the Second and Third branches of the cycle help shape a sense of Welsh identification with a Roman past as a basis for resisting Norman domination in the twelfth century. Manawydan is a character who, as John Koch notes,¹⁵² derives his name and much of his role apparently from a Welsh tradition of the story of Mandubracios and Cassivellaunus (here Caswallawn the usurper) in accounts of Caesar's invasion of Britain in the first century BCE. Ironically, Mandubracios, a kind of Celtic Quisling cooperating with the Romans, in the *Mabinogi* as Manawydan becomes a culture hero.¹⁵³ Manawydan's name also reflects that of a Celtic deity with an Irish pedigree and associations with the Isle of Man, perhaps the traditional home for an important Gwynedd dynasty with legendary links to Manaw Gododdin and northern British-Celtic heroes associated in genealogical lore with the rising North Walian realm. In addition, time in the Second Branch spent on otherworldly islands with Brân's head could symbolically bridge the traditional chronological gap between Julius Caesar's involvements in Britain and the coming of early Christianity to the island, based on the timeline of the influential Romano-Celtic monastic writer Gildas who *ca.* 500 had claimed that Christianity came to Britain a few years after the Ascension of Christ.¹⁵⁴ References to clergy in the Third Branch, and to baptism in the First, contribute to a liminal bridging of pagan and early Christian eras in the cycle. Moreover, the cycle as a whole concludes with what may be a mythic tale of a fall from grace in Wales in the Fourth Branch.¹⁵⁵ We are told at the end that Lleu *eilweith*—a second time—subdued (*oreskynnwys*) the land, later extending this rule over Gwynedd as a whole. In subduing the land a second time (though the first time here is unclear unless it was by his rival Gronw), Lleu, in symbolic relation through his eagle persona with the Ascension phase of Christ's life in Gregory's schema, could be a type of Christ whose ascending involved a promise of the Second Coming and establishment of the new Kingdom. Yet the mythic "fall" in history of both major Welsh

regions (north and south) in the Fourth Branch seems to set the stage, like the ending of the *Táin*, for the coming of Christianity and the anticipated Kingdom of Christ.

An additional dimension to the treatment of the Otherworld as landscape in Irish and Welsh story cycles, examined in particular by Carey in his study of early Irish narratives,¹⁵⁶ is the relationship of the Otherworld to patristic Christian notions of the biblical Paradise (through Eriugena's work, discussed in the next chapter) as somehow still present on Earth, being the real Earth and human nature, or, as noted earlier, as located in and around the earth on a mountain encompassing the world. In the case of the Welsh *Mabinogi*, Gregory the Great's tetramorph provides analogues to the Four Branches as a landscape of Creation: The birth of Pryderi as typing the birth of the Creator into the world; the implanting of Brân's head in Creation as a type of the resulting transfiguration or reincarnation of the world (as in the Harrowing of Hell); the renewal of the landscape of Dyfed as a type of the resulting restored physical Creation (Resurrection); and the return of right rulership to Wales through a *praxis* of contemplative natural magic identified with the land (making the transition from a lost Britain to a Welsh realm) as a type of the cosmic return to God (Second Coming). These cosmic phases associated with the land can be set in parallel in a rough way (suggestive of early medieval fourfold patterns) with Eriugena's tetrarchal and iconic description of nature, drawn partly from Maximus: God (the "incarnation" of Pryderi), primordial causes in nature shaping Creation (the implanting of Brân's head), the physical world (the curse on the land of Dyfed and its lifting), and the Return to God (Lleu's restoration).

The combined frameworks for the *Mabinogi*'s textual landscape (topographic, native, Christian, historical, cyclical, and cosmographic) shaped a stereographic extension of story to a regional place-between reader and text. That region is not only the physical topography of Wales in which the narrative with its place-name explanations and geographical associations is inscribed, but topography integrated with an elemental spiritual realm permeating that landscape in archipelagic ways. The multiple landscape frameworks of the narrative in their iconographic effect prevent a conceptual objectification of the physical environment. They extend the narrative beyond a frame of subject or object in "regioning" the physical world. The effect is a tightly entangled landscape of place, a Deleuze-Guattarian geography of desire that is spiritually erotic.¹⁵⁷ The whole *Mabinogi* cycle becomes an icon of the land, in effect a native response to the Conqueror's Domesday Book.¹⁵⁸ Like the *Táin Bó Cúailnge* (to be explored further in chapter five), its narratives become a limit or taboo on objectifying the land through colonialism or *ethos* of domination, by their resistance, like that of an icon, to any penetrating gaze.¹⁵⁹



A perhaps eleventh-century high cross at Nanhyfer churchyard in Pembrokeshire, Wales. The early Christian site at Nanhyfer (Nevern), believed to date to the sixth century, is dedicated to St. Brynach, and includes early Christian monument stones. (Author's photo.)

CHAPTER 3

PARADISE IN THE SEA: AN EARLY GEOGRAPHY OF DESIRE

Here, being neither oneself nor someone else, one is supremely united by a completely unknowing inactivity of all knowledge, and knows beyond the mind by knowing nothing.

—The Christian Dionysius, *Mystical Theology*

If desire is to subsist, a double place is necessary, a double envelope.

—Luce Irigaray

The ninth-century *Periphyseon* (*De Diuisione Naturae*) by the Hiberno-Latin philosopher John Scottus Eriugena culminates early Irish Sea writings on nature from the standpoint of intellectual history, although the book was banned for centuries by the Western church and, despite renewed interest in recent years, remains little read (there is no easily accessible English-language translation, for example) and less understood given its early medieval experiential approach to philosophy.¹ The work's symbolism of nature—its sea of divinity and clouds of theophany, its cosmic tree uniting Paradise and earth, and its fourfold textual iconography of a cosmic landscape—remains indispensable, however, for understanding larger cultural contexts of the naturally miraculous Otherworld trope, which move it even beyond the Heideggerian sense of region explored in the last chapter into a more elemental realm. The cosmic-landscape symbolism of the *Periphyseon* more than its philosophy forms the focus of this chapter, which examines how, in effect, Eriugena's cosmic iconography extends a place-region analogous in qualities to the Irish Sea Otherworld onto a Creation-wide scale.² In other words, the text illustrates views of nature implicit in the Otherworld trope, in ways relevant to current environmental philosophy. Written around the same time as the formation of core literary narratives of *Tochmarc Étaíne*, *Táin Bó Cúailnge*, and key Irish sources for the Welsh *Mabinogi*, by an Irish author in Francia with an educational background in the archipelagic milieu of those other texts,³ the *Periphyseon* challenges modern assumptions that the distinctive early Irish exegetical concern with miracles as natural “was not tied to a wider theoretical outlook,” but does so with its own iconography.⁴

As mentioned, three major images of cosmic landscape from the *Periphyseon* inform this view: (1) The sea, associated through the biblical aerial waters with clouds, which are Eriugena's figure for theophany; (2) Paradise emerging from the biblical Eden into authentic human experience of earth associated with Eden's Tree of Life, a rhizomic connector of Paradise and the earth identified with the *Logos* and (following Maximus) bearing the *logoi* of Creation in its branches; and (3) the book's overarching fourfold textual icon of Nature as cycle. The *Periphyseon*'s fourfold of cosmic Nature unfolds in Book One that which creates and is not created, God or the divine activities by which the divine can be known as cosmic "Runner" through Creation based on Eriugena's etymology of *Theos*; in Book Two, those divine activities as energies transforming nature, which the *Periphyseon* describes as a dynamic spectrum including primordial causes, theophanies, and visible effects; in Books Three and Four, the physical world through a detailed exegesis of the hexaemeral days of Creation in Genesis; and finally in Book Five, the Return to God of Creation, although these topics flow throughout the whole work, which is not so discretely divided as the fourfold outline suggests. Eriugena's fourfold parallels the tetramorphic structure of the *Mabinogi* and cosmologies of Maximus and Augustinus Hibernicus, rather than later worldviews of Dante and Aquinas. Indeed, the *Periphyseon*'s very textuality, in discussing nature through these symbolic tropes of cosmic landscape, articulates an iconographic approach to nature with empirical claims akin to the Otherworld, a participatory mode highlighted by Eriugena's explicit discussion in the text of synecdoche and metonymy as central rhetorical techniques for symbolizing nature. The whole work textually can be interpreted as a kind of participatory iconography depicting the Creation story in Genesis in light of the prologue to the gospel of John (on which Eriugena also reflects in a surviving homily), with a distinct awareness of differing readings of Latin and Greek writers while seeking patristic authority in an experiential way akin to asking an elder's guidance as a desert ascetic. The *Periphyseon* in all this culminated a tradition of early Irish hexaemeral exegesis of "natural miracles."⁵

This chapter argues that in all that the *Periphyseon* presents, despite its teacher-student dialogue format, a fundamentally non-Scholastic and "non-Western" (in any modern sense) environmental ethos, related to Eriugena's Irish Sea background. Behind the circular and ambiguous discussions of the teacher and student, with their often philosophical format, hovers John Cassian's talks with desert elders in the *Conferences* combined with early Irish "scientific" cosmological writings. The explicit apophatic basis to Eriugena's cosmology makes sense of syllogism and dialectic as experiential and cosmic. (The *Periphyseon* identifies dialectic with cosmic Return and with the gospels in Book Four, Chapter Four.) Although Eriugena references the Augustinian sense of archetypes of Creation being in God, to emphasize in effect the significance of the earth, he does so within the framework of a metonymic view of Creation in which there is dynamic engagement of divine manifestations with the physical world outside of God's essence, highlighting the mysterious non-objectifiable nature of

the ultimate essence of things. Rather than the world being a pale metaphor of another reality of archetypes, it is in the dynamic relation between God's ideas as energies and the world that Eriugena's focus finds reality—in the relation of Paradise and the world overlapping in an energized human experience of earth. In the last part of this chapter, that emphasis on relation in Eriugena's hexaemeral cosmology will be considered as a potential link between modern readings of the Otherworld trope and current concerns in landscape studies with shaping an ecological land ethic.

1. The Sea. Eriugena's distinctive approach to nature is perhaps most apparent on a narrative level in the image of the sea in the *Periphyseon*. This runs against conventions in Classical and much medieval literature of the sea as allegory for turbulent alienation of human life from nature. Analogous to the sea in *Immram Brain* discussed earlier, Eriugena's symbolism embraces in true archipelagic fashion the sea's flux and energy:

Let us spread sails, then, and set out to sea. For Reason, not inexperienced in these waters, fearing neither the threats of the waves nor windings nor the Syrtes nor rocks, shall speed our course: indeed she finds it sweeter to exercise her skill in the hidden straits of the Ocean of Divinity than idly to bask in the smooth and open waters, where she cannot display her power...until the grace of God leading and helping and aiding and moving her by patient and assiduous study of the Holy Scriptures, she may return and reach again that which in the Fall of the First Man she had lost, the contemplation of Truth...⁶

Reason, *ratio* in Eriugena's description of the sea is a Latin term used to gloss the Greek *logos*, which not only denoted the capacity to reason in a modern sense, but also played a large role in the early Middle Ages in iconographic doctrines of the divine *Logos* thickening into icon in the Incarnation, and in cosmological writings of Maximus the Confessor that influenced Eriugena as translator and writer. For Maximus, the *logoi* of the *Logos* are the divine energies running through Creation—the reasons of the Reason or the discourses of the Discourse, the harmonies of the Harmony. Eriugena's distinctive image of reason casting forth on the “Ocean of Divinity,” perhaps echoing Luke 5:4, stands for a mutually reciprocal theophany, in which human beings and the natural world participate “textually” in divine energies. The preeminent Eriugenist Édouard Jeuneau observes that if the cathedral is the *axis mundi* of later Western Scholasticism, the sea is the polycentric (and Irish-influenced) exteriorized focus in Eriugena's archipelagic cosmic landscape.⁷ It is his desert.

The image of the sea as “Ocean of Divinity” forms a more physically relational form of metaphor (or metonym) than may initially appear to modern readers, because of Eriugena's similarly archipelagic identification of clouds (mediating between earthly and aerial waters in Irish interpretations of Genesis, and related to Paradise in the *Navigatio Sancti Brendani*⁸) with theophany-fantasy that shapes the engagement of divine energies with the earth in bodily asceticism. For Eriugena, a heart open to relation with the divine energies engages their manifestation in theophanies as the dynamic reality of Nature, which is symbolized

by moving light-filled clouds interpenetrating human life and intertwining in physical environment the tripartite Irish cosmos of sea, heaven, and earth. The sea of divinity encompasses the *logoi* of Creation, but they in turn constitute and transfigure the sea through their Return to God in Eriugena's cosmology, by the synergy of deification or *theosis*. The sea image in the archipelagic background highlighted by Jeaneau thus also becomes a metonym in the *Periphyseon* for an elemental Otherworld that is bodily (just as "the desert" metonymically stands for asceticism): "Our bodies are placed on this earth or surrounded by this air . . . bodies within bodies" like "the fish in the sea."⁹

Desert writers (in Athanasius' account of St. Antony and the influential monastic writings of St. Isaac of Nineveh paralleled by the Irish St. Columbanus) refer to the spiritually atmospheric sea in which monks swim as the quietude of the desert in which they can remember "things within."¹⁰ The desert encompasses the things within; the things within constitute and encompass the desert. Just so Eriugena's theophanies (figured by the biblical trope of clouds embodying energies of God) encompass cosmic relations, which in turn, as in Paradise or the landscape of the Otherworld, in a sense include theophanies. In his exegesis of the third day of Creation in Book Three of the *Periphyseon*, he describes the waters in the first chapter of Genesis as symbolizing the composite beings of the physical world; those waters also constitute his "Ocean of Divinity."

Eriugena's use of the sea as a central figure of transfigurational "landscape" reflects a distinctive atmospheric cosmography of Irish Sea cultures that is at once both incarnational and numinous. More than metaphor, it embodies his whole empirical claim of Nature as a theophany whose reality lies in the overlapping and flowing together of inspired human fantasy with nonhuman cosmos. The Eriugenian sea places Nature *in* God panentheistically, in the sense that God's energies become transformative of nature as a result of the Incarnation, while placing God (in the sense of the divine energies) within Nature. It thus forms a gloss on Paul's words at the Areopagus in Athens, "in Him we live and move and have our being" (Acts 17:28), which according to church tradition inspired Dionysius the Areopagite, to whom were attributed the apophatic writings that Eriugena translated. The Dionysian texts were another key source for Eriugena's landscape of the sea, which, reflecting also Maximus' adaptation of them, embodied an elemental appearing of place-world in the sense of experiencing larger networks of life through divine energies. The resulting experience of cosmic place is nonetheless bodily, as if in the physical sea. We see "through bodies in bodies, not through Himself," Eriugena wrote.¹¹ Irigaray, seeking a similar elemental fluidity from a postmodern secular perspective, evokes the relational sea in an analogous way:

And the sea can shed shimmering scales indefinitely. Her depths peel off into innumerable thin, shining layers. And each one is the equal of the other as it catches a reflection and lets it go. As it preserves and blurs. As it captures the glinting play of light. As it sustains mirages. Multiple and still far too numerous for the pleasure of the eye, which is lost in that host of sparkling surfaces. And with no end in sight. And these surfaces are all equally deep and superficial. Unless one of them is made

into a bridge that holds a person up, prevents him from sinking, that crosses over but never penetrates...¹²

Irigaray's explications of elemental qualities of water and air in relation to bodily place evoke environmental aspects of Eriugena's cloud-theophanies, as well as the early Irish colors of the winds and their relation to early Irish colors of asceticism, to be explored in the next chapter. With regard to bodily ascetic connections of Eriugena's sea trope, the "fish in the sea" motif attributed to Antony, and echoed in the *Periphyseon*, was an apparent reference to quietude or *hesychia*, a synergy of works and grace identified with the desert and designed to draw the mind into the heart through contemplation—related to physical rhythms of chanting, praying, breathing, pulse, bodily prostration and positioning, and fasting. Similar ascetic practice was associated in the Irish Sea province with sea-related symbolism, in some cases involving literally standing in the ocean.¹³ *Apatheia*, burning love for God in a balanced bodily dispassion identified with quietude in the famous late sixth-century desert tract *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*,¹⁴ is another apt ascetic analogue for the immersion-in-the-sea image of Athanasius' Antony as background to Eriugena's sea trope. Eriugena's distinctive relation of sea to peace and freedom ("peace" being another meaning too of the Irish term *síd* for mound-portal to the Otherworld) further relates the image to a desire of relation that is iconographic in early medieval terms while also being analogous to the postmodern redefinition of the Western sense of desire by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari in their geophilosophy.

The earlier quoted passage on the sea by Eriugena comes near the beginning of Book Four of the *Periphyseon*, which extends exegesis on the Six Days of Creation from Book Three into creation of man on the sixth day (following assertion of immortality for animals within the fourfold cycle of the *Periphyseon's* cosmic iconography). The text identifies the sea with divinity through energies of the primordial causes expressed as theophanies and visible effects in a redeemed sense of earth. But the full passage also identifies land with the word or *logos* of scripture that needs to be cultivated and tracked while humans eat the Eucharistic bread of the *Logos*, until reason returns to a reenergized experience of this earth. Earth in its objectified state is described as featuring in biblical terms brambles that symbolize the sparse density on it of divine intellect, or human self-realization from the standpoint of Eriugena's participatory divine ecology. Book Four, Chapter Four, of the *Periphyseon* describes in its exegesis Christ's return in the Resurrection to a re-synergized "earth of nature," or "His earth," uniting earth and Paradise as non-objectified process, in an experiential dialectic of *apophysis*.

2. Paradise. Another significant cosmic image in the *Periphyseon*, Paradise embodies the transpersonal empathy that is redeemed human nature engaging in larger contexts of life. Explicating the Garden of Eden, a biblical landscape associated in some early medieval texts with the Otherworld, Eriugena wrote:

Paradise is not a localized or particular piece of woodland on earth, but a spiritual garden sown with the seeds of the virtues and planted in human nature, or, to be more precise, is nothing else but the human substance itself created in the image

of God, in which the Tree of Life, that is the Word and wisdom of God, gives fruit to all life; and in the midst of which streams forth the Fountain of all good things, which again is the Divine Wisdom... In this intelligible Paradise God goes walking.¹⁵

Eriugena throughout the *Periphyseon* also uses the Latin term *terra*, or earth in the sense of land or region, as a mystical name for Creation when experienced in relation with Paradise through the Tree of Life. *Terra* in its energized (or as we might term it non-objectified) state is “the bliss of eternal life and the stability of the Primordial Causes, from which all things which are have their origin... the fertile soil of the Primordial Causes.”¹⁶ The primordial causes are Eriugena’s adaptation of the *logoi* that Maximus developed as activities of the *Logos*, which in their effects as theophanies interpenetrate and emerge from the earth. The earth thus functions in a sense as the ultimate Deleuze–Guattarian-style “plane of immanence” or nexus of creative desire.¹⁷

Eriugena’s metonymic or iconographic sense of Nature emerges through his discussion of Paradise in the image of the cosmic Tree of Life in Genesis. Its linking of different dimensions and temporalities in his philosophy of Nature meets the standard for rhizomic symbolism set by Deleuze and Guattari, even with their criticism of hierarchies in linear Western “tree genealogies.”¹⁸ Eriugena’s exegesis in Book Five of the *Periphyseon* describes, following Maximus, that other tree in Eden, the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and of Evil, as standing for the visible creature in the Deleuze–Guattarian fixed sense of Western cultural trees as genealogical landscape. In Eriugena’s experientially symbolist view, that visible or actual state becomes an abstraction when conceptualized as an object. By contrast, the Tree of Life is the All-Tree that is the real and relational *Logos*, amid whose branches, roots, and fruit the *logoi* of Creation manifest in visible imagery dwell dynamically:

“And the Lord God produced from the earth (that is, from our material nature) the All-tree,” that is, the Incarnate Word, in Which and through Which all things are made, and Which is all things... For the other things which are called good are good not through themselves but through participation in Him Who in Himself truly is the Good Which is, and all good and goodness, and the fount and origin, the cause and principle, the end and perfection, the movement and rest, the middle and the end, the environment and the place, of all goodness and all good... For He is the Beautiful and the Beauty that lies in all things beautiful, and He is the cause and perfection of Beauty, and those who taste and feed on Him know no satiety: for the more they feed on Him the greater grows their desire for that repast.¹⁹

In this use of tree imagery to relate Paradise and earth, Eriugena radically reads the Fall as objectification of the earth or land, following Greek writers who saw the taking of the fruit by Adam and Eve as an immature and heedless possessiveness. In that objectified state *terra*, in one sense a mystical name for wholeness, in another can be understood as “the accursed heart of Adam,” the

“earth of the heart of the mind,” in which case the mind separated from the heart is commanded to “eat the earth” in the sense of purgation—to ground itself and rediscover connectivity with life, in order to escape from an abstracted, objectified, and interiorized sense of the land. With the divine included in Nature (at least in terms of activity), redemption lies in both a return to and a transfiguration of the earth as the nexus of divine energies, through the Incarnation and by *theosis* of human beings. This means in effect realization of the overlap of Paradise and earth (of human nature and Nature at large) in the divine energies, embodied in the Tree of Life. By a realignment of “seeing with the heart’s eyes,” an early Christian phrase in use in Ireland for “getting the mind into the heart”—or grounding the mind in the divine energies in relation to earth—human beings can be restored to Nature.²⁰ (Such terminology is complicated by varying translations of the Greek term *nous* from which it emerges—translated often as “mind” but perhaps best understood as energy of the soul, with “heart” a connective essence of soul integrated with body.²¹) Lack of obedience in Eden can be described for Eriugena—following similar patristic thought—as a lack of both wonder and of listening (the two combined in obedience to an elder in desert asceticism) in connecting to a larger Divine Nature. The result is not Augustinian Original Sin, but an earth associated with the heart in which both are objectified by not being in relation to a triadic ecosemiosis or iconography of divine energies—the result being death for human beings.²²

By contrast, “realized” earth in the *Periphyseon* is not an object but a dynamic process, an ecology of divine energies and their expression in theophanies engaged with the physical. Eriugena, in this sense of earth as “the immutable stability of the Primordial Causes,” further explains the biblical phrase “Earth you are and unto earth you shall return” (Gen. 3:19) in terms of the divine energies from which comes life and to which it must return. He explains: “[As] it is from the dust of the sensible earth that all things born of earth take the cause of their birth, so the numerical multiplicity of all things visible and invisible is generated from the fertility of the Primordial Causes.” A landscape-region of that “bliss of eternal life” again is his definition of earth in dynamic relation to the divine energies, which are a kind of overlay landscape to it, like the Otherworld, only elementally constituting it as well. He queries in this same exegesis why it is the man’s body only that is condemned to dissolution in the biblical text, not the woman’s. He takes this scripture to be what he calls a synecdoche for the end of sexual duality, an integrity of humanness catalyzed by Christ (who according to Eriugena is neither male nor female after the Resurrection), to be restored in the Return to God: “So these words foretell the Return, not into this earth [*terra*], but rather to the spiritual nature.”²³ Yet that spiritual nature, or Paradise, in turn is figured by, transformative of, and in a sense present in “this earth” in relation to Paradise, the landscape or “plane of immanence” that is Creation in Eriugena’s fourfold image of Nature.

This redeemed earthly Paradise is related complexly to the feminine, just as in the case of the “land of women” of the Irish Otherworld. “Woman,” Eriugena writes in his exegesis, “is the corporeal sense which is naturally implanted in

human nature, through which—in those, that is, who are perfect—the beauty of the visible creature is referred to the Glory of God [divine glory figuring God's energies]... The seed of the woman is the perfect, natural and multiple knowledge of visible things, free from all error."²⁴ Femaleness here is a figure of the corporeal and natural, in a hierarchy ruled by maleness as figuring the mind, both to merge in the Return to God. But through ascetic synergy, femaleness is also a source and landscape in the Irigarayan sense of the realignment or restoration of sense, mind, and heart, as well as of the Incarnation, as will be discussed further soon. Of the bodily creature Eriugena writes that both the natural form of the body and the form of the soul were made in God's image. The separation of femaleness and maleness will be overcome holistically in the realization of earth itself as process rather than object.

Apparently extending a brief comment from Augustine's early exegesis (dropped from his later commentaries), Eriugena opined that, at the time of the expulsion from Paradise, God in effect highlighted the possibility of humans stretching out their hand to the fruit of the Tree of Life, as an open invitation to restoration. Eriugena reads Genesis 3:22–23 from the Latin and Greek as an expectant "may not" rather than a negative "lest": "and now, *may he not* put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever: *Therefore* the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden to till the ground from whence he was taken" (emphases added). Part of that opportunity for environmental self-realization in escaping from an interiorized focus left by ancestral sin seems to involve experience of sexual difference, even in terms of asceticism, in finding authentic, integrated human place in the world. Indeed, enduring association of femaleness with Paradise (double-folded in its relation with earth in Eriugena and Otherworld texts) could have been seen as fulfilled in identification of the God-bearer Mary with Paradise. This perhaps also laid the groundwork for the literary Irish Sea Otherworld as the land of women and for the role of the goddess of Sovereignty of the land in authorizing Irish kingship. That motif may have been preserved in part due to interpretation of it as a type of the God-bearer's role in authorizing rulership in the world, as in some Byzantine iconography. The Ionan monk Cú Chuimne wrote in Hiberno-Latin verse in the early eighth century: "By a woman and a tree the world first perished; by the power of a woman it has returned to salvation."²⁵ That latter redemption of course had tree associations too, through the Cross as Tree of Life. Eriugena's Tree of Life, encompassing the world and being encompassed by it, parallels qualities of Irigaray's sense of the double-enveloped feminine body as landscape contained and containing, as well as of patristic identification of the biblical figure of foundational divine Wisdom (gendered feminine) with Christ. At the north end of the archipelago in Icelandic texts, Norns as female guardians of the cosmic tree Yggdrasil parallel too female guardians of the grail as another symbol of ethically relational landscape.²⁶ Eriugena concludes:

The meaning is: We must not mourn unduly the death of man, nor weep so profusely for his fall from Paradise; for hope of the Return is not entirely taken away from him. It may be that he will put forth his hand, that is, stretch his zeal

for good conduct by practicing the virtues, so that he may take of the fruit of the Tree of Life, which is the Spiritual Gifts of the Word of God, and eat the food of pure contemplation, by virtue of which he shall live forever and never revert to the poverty of [objectified] temporal things, which shall perish altogether at the end of the world, but pass wholly into God and be One with Him [through the divine primordial causes or energies in the relational context of the All-Tree].²⁷

This embodied motion of deification through divine energies in a redeemed relation to physical nature (connected with the Eucharist tradition) shapes the archipelagic difference-in-identity of Eriugena's landscape. The continuous incarnate motion of the Return of Creation to God in Eriugena's cosmography (apotheosized in Christ's Incarnation and Resurrection-Ascension) synchronizes with cycles of John Cassian's model for bodily engagement with the earth by the desert ascetic. A return to God of digesting, embodying, and emanating the *logoi* of Scripture and of Creation, figured in the fruit of the earth, transfigures the spiritual athlete in a performative asceticism. In articulating this process cosmically, Eriugena rereads the curse placed on Adam to eat from the earth in sorrow, feeding on the grass of the field amid thorns and thistles, and eating bread in the sweat of his face (Gen. 3:17–19), by suggesting that an objectified sense of earth must be purged and transformed and reconnected to the divine energies, becoming dynamic. The grass embodies "a physical contemplation" through ascetic struggle. "In the knowable sweat of the face of intelligence" man eats "the bread of theology in accordance with the knowledge whose face is incorruptible," that is, the bread of life, Christ. "So the earth if well eaten is itself a purge through the action of the heart, but the grass is knowledge itself based on the contemplation of the nature of those things which have been created . . . the bread is true doctrine based on theology of the mysteries."²⁸ Knowledge here is empirically experiential. Nature, while fallen through objectification, when engaged as a dynamic elemental region intertwines human and nonhuman restoration and redemption (backgrounding too Eriugena's argument for the potential immortality of animals). The relation between the sea, Paradise, and the experiential fourfold of Creation in the *Periphyseon* evokes a sense of the Otherworld as region, but one entwined fluidly amid elemental aspects of the cosmos. Those interconnections can be termed apophatic in relation to theology, and iconographic in relation to aesthetics. They present in Eriugena's narrative of nature a hidden sense of essence experienced as an engageable energy in the physical world, as if the world were an icon screen or moving static-charged sheet, with energy coming through from an unseen "other side" into a relational place with the viewer.

3. The Fourfold. Eriugena's tropes of the sea and Paradise dwell amid his other major trope of cosmic landscape, the archipelagic four-in-one elemental icon of Nature as a whole. This fourfold consists of God as Creator; the primordial causes or *logoi* in Creation (in effect the uncreated divine energies as theophanies manifest in and shaping Creation, which Eriugena usually but not always describes in created terms, depending on perspective); physical Creation (through which those energies run); and God as the source to which all Creation returns through

the primordial causes. That cycle is both synchronic and diachronic, transcendent and immanent, in multiple temporalities. As mentioned earlier, Eriugena's fourfold itself forms a type of iconographic landscape (or "*multiplex theoria*"²⁹) akin in textualized visual effect to the art of early monastic manuscripts such as the Book of Kells or the tetramorph of the *Mabinogi*'s Otherworld landscape. Spatiality is causality in Eriugena's cosmology because of the convergence of this fourfold, with experience of difference in place focusing creative and relational energy. The primordial causes, the *logoi* or divine energies, are both in the spatial landscape of physical Creation as theophanies while always already shaping it. Divinization of humanity implicit in the cosmology transforms human lived experience in the world into landscape-based causality. Eriugena in this textual icon of Creation develops a non-Western *meontology* (or cosmology of natural transcendent nonbeing) that links his fourfold Nature to the focus on hidden-yet-appearing Being in environmental philosophy influenced by Heidegger. Along those lines, the eco-phenomenologist David Wood would build on Naess' aforementioned list of qualities derived from ecological science by environmental philosophy—"complexity, diversity, and symbiosis"—to include "dependency, cooperation, symbiosis, and synergy...rupture, catastrophe, and transformation...not just what we usually include in 'nature.'"³⁰ But that expanded definition of deep ecology by Wood is "natural" for Eriugena's framework, incorporating both being and nonbeing *in* nature.

In its cosmic-landscape tropes of the sea, Paradise and the Tree of Life, and the fourfold of Nature, Eriugena's topology implies an earthly landscape that resists spatial universalisms of what became normative European space. His schema upends conventional hierarchies that privilege a transcendent concept of either God or human subjectivity above Nature. Eriugena writes that

God, who cannot be apprehended in Himself, is apprehended in a certain way through creation, while creation itself, by an ineffable miracle, is transformed into God...Divine Nature, while It creates everything and cannot be created by anything is, in a marvelous fashion, created in all things which are from It.³¹

This models iconographic rather than objectifying desire, through empathetic imagination creatively engaging the real rather than trying to control it. Maximus, Eriugena's cosmographical mentor, had said that in terms of energy the *Logos* (Christ the Creator God) is the *logoi* (the purposes or harmonies of Creation).³² In a related dialogue on apophatic dialectic (based in the reciprocal mystery of God and God's ideas), Eriugena described the mutuality of discourse [*logos*] in which "each of us is created in the other: for when I understand what you understand I am made your understanding...our true and ultimate essence is understanding specified by the contemplation of truth."³³ Or in terms of John's Gospel: "In the beginning was the Discourse, and the Discourse was God..." We see here again a Heideggerian fusion of *logos* and *phusis*, but one implicated in the moral personalism and sacramentalism of the Incarnate Christian *Logos*.

Eriugena's landscape tropes themselves, within the narrative of the *Periphyseon*, highlight an environmental language of philosophy. The mutually reciprocal cosmic process of *kenosis* and *theosis* exemplified in both Eriugena's fourfold and in desert patristic theology, enfolding all Creation via the divinized human, and vice versa, in a participatory and transformative "language," is akin in certain effects to "role-reversal imitation" in human development theories today. It relates to concern with developing cosmic empathy in humans to overcome "nature deficit disorder."³⁴ But it also involves a dynamically iconographic overlay inscription on topography,³⁵ in which (paralleling early illuminated art) image is privileged more than phonetic writing. By highlighting text as place, it engages narrative energy with physical meaning. The result is a Lyotardian reinscription of the Sublime, offering a potential ecological and apophatic turn to critical theory from outside a constructed mainline "Western" past, rather than "retro-medievalism" hailing a Scholasticism whose monumental ecclesiology grew from Augustinian Original Sin.³⁶

Eriugena's symbolism—sea with clouds, Paradise with Tree of Life, cosmic fourfold—conveys an experiential reality that ultimately is at odds with the more conceptual view of nature that became prevalent in the West, even in modern science. In recentering Eriugena's views, usually considered a marginal alternative to Western intellectual history, later medieval approaches to nature of Thomas Aquinas, Duns Scotus, and William of Ockham can be reimagined ecocritically as peripheral splittings of elements from the early medieval outlook epitomized by Eriugena, lacking the latter's background in earlier cultures of desert-style asceticism. In Eriugena's portrayal of nature as what could be called a "process narrative," theophanies (the effect of his primordial causes also known as *logoi* or divine energies) emanate in the physical environment and transform the world continually through mutually reciprocal creative desire of humans, nonhumans, and the divine energies or grace. Humans engaged with the relational *logoi* in this cosmic discourse become divinized with the nonhuman landscape. And intentionality is linked to causality, with humans participating in the latter through the landscape. The result echoes Wood's paradoxical call for cultural narratives of landscape to make the invisible visible while simultaneously rendering it invisible—a nature distinct yet intertwining, in which the physical environment is honored more because there is a mystery beyond it supporting a relational process.³⁷

Logoi are the hidden causes of Eriugena's Nature, the secret folds in the cosmos (a term that in Greek originally meant "beauty"), the essence of created beings in the sense of his term "primordial causes." But they are realized as it were in their relation to God, which also establishes them in union with divine energies because that relation is neither direct nor objectified.³⁸ In this sense then human being in the image of God (Gen. 1:26–27, the apotheosis of which is the Incarnation) is the imaging forth of the divine. Yet it is in a relationship external to God's mysterious essence as absolute Other, which apophatically is beyond-nothingness to the creature even as the creature is created by the divine *ex nihilo*. On that energized brink between being and nonbeing the identity of

the creature is fulfilled in cosmic empathy. In this sense Eriugena's focus on the surface flows and relationships of earth and ultimately Nature as participatory icon (in his fourfold schema) becomes understandable from his Hiberno-Latin background, in a tradition concerned with the naturalness as well as the mystery of miracles. His emphasis on primordial causes as substantive but energy; his ambiguity on their createdness (which he generally stresses in relating them to natural phenomena but also subverts in his description of their emanations as theophanies and in suggesting how they may be uncreated energies after all); his somewhat blurred distinctions between those causes and their effects and creatures—all this becomes understandable in a philosophical milieu that is not Scholastic but participatorily iconographic, in not only the geography but asceticism and story-telling of the early Irish Sea archipelago. His work can then be appreciated not merely as muddled patristics or Gnostic, as sometimes alleged,³⁹ but as itself a kind of environmental narrative.

Eriugena directly explicates the rhetorical tropes of synecdoche and metonymy as models for such iconography of cosmic landscape, symbolizing dynamic Nature as participatory narrative. He does this by discussing the day-star or morning star mentioned in Greek and Latin versions of the Psalms (109:3 LXX, 110:3 Vulgate), a symbol of *visible* Creation energized in cosmic relations: "With You is the beginning in the day of Your power, in the brightness of your saints; I have begotten You from the womb before the morning star."⁴⁰ For Eriugena the morning star here is synecdoche for the visible world of physical nature, and the dynamic appearing of spiritual energies or brightness entwined with it. In this symbol, he writes, "the part is signified by the whole and the whole by the part" (following Maximus' linguistic cosmology identifying *Logos* with *logoi* in terms of energies, not essence).⁴¹ Given that "morning star" is a complex biblical term in Latin and Western translations, related to descriptions of both Satan and Christ, his choice of the term as exemplary synecdoche for the visible world is especially interesting. The world for him can either be energized by collaborative participation with divine energies, or objectified as a kind of wasteland. Eriugena embeds this discussion of synecdoche (for which he uses the term in Greek letters, glossed by *conceptio*) in a section of the *Periphyseon* discussing nature as participatory theophanies—emanations of primordial causes in a cycle of transfiguration. He refers to analogous examples of scriptural reciprocity of metaphor that include the double-fold of aerial and lower waters in Genesis, related to his own sea trope, as a fusion of metaphor and synecdoche connecting the visible and invisible.⁴² Above the firmament are the aerial waters that he identifies with the primordial causes or divine energies, related dynamically to the lower waters of the sea of Europe's archipelago. He discusses metonymic effect, as referenced earlier, as a means of conveying the entwined nature of cosmic place as event (akin to early medieval use of "the desert" for ascetic life). In fusing the physical and the symbolic in identity-with-difference, through language based directly in the physical while still conveying a sense of difference, metonymy and synecdoche parallel the function of iconography. They resist totalizing possession or control, and potentially realize a dynamic relational flow of energy between language and a natural world that still remains

essentially a mystery. The energized earth becomes a fluid textuality. Eriugena's Irish exegete predecessor Augustine Hibernicus developed this parallel between iconography and metonymy,⁴³ while Eriugena wrote (in the same section of the *Periphyseon* as his discussion relating place to the sea, referenced earlier) more fully of how "the things which partly lie hidden in their causes and partly are revealed in their effects . . . of them the fabric of the world is properly woven."⁴⁴ He adds,

all things which are in place (because everywhere they are seen to be enclosed in things greater than themselves) can be called places, although none of them is strictly speaking a place but is contained within the place (of its proper nature), and although we see that it is by *metonomia* (that is, by a transference of name) that those things which are contained are called after the things which contain them . . . they are not contained by them in such a way that without them they could not subsist within their natural limits.⁴⁵

In this Irigaray-like move, Eriugena goes beyond the Aristotelian notion of place as always associated with being "in" something to a more elemental (and, in the parlance of Deleuze and Guattari, "rhizomic") view. Everything in place is in a sense contained, but "they [the places contained] are not contained by them in such a way that without them they could not subsist." So they are within their own "natural limits" in a way that is paradoxically not containment, because of their nature being energies or processes of relation, the *logoi* of dynamic cosmic discourse. Desire is culturally defined as lack as in the modern West, and with it metonymy. But if desire alternately means relation as Deleuze and Guattari would have it, so likewise does metonymy, and language and symbolism with it, take on environmental aspects of physical relations.

Metonymic sensibility, riding textual surfaces of the physical world, can embody an ecological sense of interchangeable yet differentiated flows of energy. Relevant ascetic-related examples again include the use of "sweat" to mean hard work, in which there is a physical connection between the two terms that is (literally) fluid, or *pneuma* linking breath and spirit, the latter being an identity too of bodily import in hesychastic and liturgical chant regimens. In metonymy (whose root meaning "change of name" relates it to metamorphic shape-shifting in Otherworld texts and art), a word is in effect a name related to the physical in image. Metonymy simultaneously draws attention to bodily or environmental connections of language, and to the difference between language and the signified. This can highlight the latter as non-internalized and hence non-objectifiable, but also underscore the relationality of the word. The resulting energy "in-between" physical environment and language is the relational *logos* of metonymy and desire.

Eriugena's metonymic sense of primordial causes or divine energies as fluid landscape follows in part the seventh-century Isidore of Seville's influential focus (popular in early Irish literary culture) on etymology and names rather than allegory as a means of understanding the world through language.⁴⁶ Isidore emphasized names and their relation to the real through genealogical

interactions that carried with them a claim to finding mysterious essence. But Eriugena links a fluid metonymy to experience of the divine energies in nature. His “etymologies” are sometimes actual etymological discussion, as of *Theos* in Greek being derived in part from a term meaning “Runner,” which he relates to the divine energies, and sometimes involve image-relations such as his landscape tropes of the Tree of Life and the sea with clouds. But in either case they shape dynamic image-genealogies of Maximus’ cosmic *logoi*, as primordial causes manifest in theophanies infusing Creation. His quasi-ecological and experiential approach to etymology does not claim to pierce the mystery of essence, but surfs its flow.

In this, the *Periphyseon*’s discussion of Nature parallels in surprising ways Irigaray’s concern with nature as elemental immanence, not fixed in any human sense of region but flowing on and forming dynamic surfaces, not essentialist but experiential. The parallel illustrates again a potential fuller reading of Eriugena in environmental terms than past misinterpretation of his work as semi-barbaric patristics, pantheism or idealism irrelevant to current eco-phenomenological concerns. Irigaray emphasizes elemental relations as reality, like the “place-between” of iconography, even more than region itself. She critiques Heidegger’s regionalism for treating earth in too essential a manner as in a binary with spirit.⁴⁷ She queries Heidegger’s concepts of “opening” and “clearing” in relation to place and region, suggesting that they take an unnecessarily metaphysical turn in erasing elemental physical constituents of nothingness, which for her are implied by the dual meaning of the biblical Greek term *pneuma* as both breath and spirit, influential on the biblical culture of early asceticism.⁴⁸ She explores *pneuma* metonymically, in its fusing physical and spiritual meaning more closely than generic metaphor, but in a mysterious double-enfolded relation embodied in human experience of the world. Her notion that the double-enveloped and the fluidly and physically elemental all together constitute place suggests how Eriugena’s writing in its tropes of landscape illumines an elemental sense of the Otherworld.

For Irigaray, the dual meaning of *pneuma* suggests how air, like the elemental fluidity of water she explores in another study, can transgress conventional binarizing of physical and spiritual (which impresses on humans a hierarchy and ethic of dominating nature), by instead both encompassing place and being contained by it.⁴⁹ Air symbolizes a rhizomic interconnectiveness in nature reminiscent of the *síde* in *Tochmarc Étaíne*. Yet Irigaray’s elemental and experiential cosmology overlaps even more with that of Eriugena’s primordial causes. The bodies of angels in traditional beliefs figure for Irigaray the double place of reciprocity in landscape she seeks to articulate: They encompass and are encompassed, as in a sea of air or water figuring the spiritual, and they relate rather than possess or objectify.⁵⁰ Angelic bodies become for Irigaray relational images of fluid memory and imagination that parallel in certain respects the notion of theophanies or primordial causes in nature from the *Periphyseon*, while also being partly analogous to the function of connective or full “bodies without organs” in the geophilosophy of Deleuze and Guattari. “If desire [as wonder, rather than lack]

is to subsist, a double place is necessary, a double envelope," Irigaray argues, embracing alternate definitions of desire as relation akin to those of Deleuze and Guattari.⁵¹ Irigaray calls for an empirical sense of how the "simpleness of the simplicity of the play of the world does not permit . . . penetration by human understanding. It is. Posed, positionless. Staying up, holding up, in air [*sic*]"⁵² In that poised reciprocity of breathing, as in practice of yoga (or, in a different way, hesychasm), those who renounce self-willing

are drawn into the mystery of a word that seeks its incarnation. Trusting exorbitantly in that which makes up the body and flesh of all diction: air, breath, song. Receiving and giving themselves in that which is still senseless. In order to be reborn of it, one through another, invested with a saying that is of forgotten inspiration.⁵³

In Irigaray's biblical exegesis, the Virgin Mary gave herself over to such mutually reciprocal, double-enveloped engagement with air that is experiential, antidoting Eve's attempt to abstract and objectify the world by taking the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil.⁵⁴

But ultimately a more interiorized approach to nature, traceable back to Augustine, underlay development of Western European views in the medieval era. The medievalist Marina Smyth suggestively compared Augustine's model of the physical world, in his influential *De Genesi ad litteram*, with that of an unfolding computer program.⁵⁵ For Augustine, God's energies are within God's mind, unfolding over time their effect on the world.⁵⁶ This view (developed further by Aquinas) is sometimes called the "identity theory" of Christian theology by contrast with the "energy theory" behind Eriugena's views discussed earlier.⁵⁷ That is because of Augustine's tendency toward identification of God's attributes absolutely and essentially with God the Father-Son in the *filiouque* model of the Trinity. The identity theory figured the physical world as objectively symbolic, reflecting a set archetypal pattern in the spiritual realm, which is implanted into this world but without direct relations. Augustine as a result defined theophanies as arbitrary objective insertions into the world. Augustine's semiotics of theophany included an arbitrary insertion of temporal objects into Creation, such as the Mosaic fire in the burning bush (the supernatural objectified). But the Irish Augustine, the seventh-century Augustinus Hibernicus who was a forebear of Eriugena in writing Hiberno-Latin hexaemeral cosmology, emphasized in his exegesis a cosmic pattern engaging with the physical world, in which the seemingly unnatural can express a normally hidden natural order. The natural miracle emanates an incorporeal energy or even symbolic "illusion," in Deleuze-Guattarian terms a real virtual transfiguring an objectified actual. Hibernicus' discussion of the fire in the burning bush, for example, is arguably closer in spirit to St. Gregory of Nyssa's account than to St. Augustine's, despite similarities between all three.⁵⁸

The "energy theory" of Greek patristics invested the natural world with real integrated symbolic meaning, as a landscape of desire in the non-Augustinian

sense of divine energy melding creatively with topography, rather than an Augustinian sense of a more real world of archetypes in a spiritual realm apart from earth. Eriugena sided with the energy theory in his philosophy of nature. But he also tended to describe God's ideas or their emanating theophanies in nature (following Augustine) as created and more substantive of creatures than the dynamic sense in which they often are described in Eastern patristics.⁵⁹ Eriugena did add, however, that whether the theophanies or primordial causes are considered in Creation, as created, or as uncreated, depends on the perspective from which one views them.⁶⁰ In other words, from an earthly perspective, they might appear to be created manifestations, but from a more transcendent perspective they could be considered uncreated; in either case they are eternal, a mystery, and from the human standpoint in flux. Part of the challenge to his work was the impoverished vocabulary of Latin to grapple with the intricacies of Greek patristic thought and the difficulties of a "school" approach to conveying experiential cosmology of the somewhat Zen-like aphorisms and stories recorded of desert fathers. Yet the very ambiguity of the spectrum in Eriugena's discussion of primordial causes suggests for him their experientiality as dynamic energies rather than Augustinian or Scholastic archetypes. In the *Periphyseon*'s circular iconographic approach to writing cosmology, Eriugena's work is in line with patristic prosody of writers such as Cyril of Alexandria, who "felt that the mysterious nature of the faith truly reflected the reality that discourse about the incarnation of God was not something that could be neatly packaged and wrapped up in a scholastic fashion."⁶¹ John Carey has contrasted Augustine of Hippo's approach with that of the cosmology of Augustinus Hibernicus, Eriugena's predecessor, who in his earlier *De Mirabilibus Sacrae Scripturae* developed a view of biblical miracles as natural with "no gap . . . between a thing's interior essence and its phenomenal character," in Carey's words.⁶² In Hibernicus' terminology, adapting views of Augustine of Hippo, this involves understanding the role in nature of a higher *ratio* or harmony of life interwoven with physical beings, and, comparable to the divine energies (*ratio* being a synonym in Hiberno-Latin of *logos*), more dynamically entwined with the world than in Augustine's theory of a discrete divine pattern for life.⁶³ That parallels Eriugena's approach in his *Periphyseon*, which religious scholar Thomas O'Loughlin describes as the culmination of an early Irish tradition of hexaemeral interpretation including Hibernicus' work. In Eriugena's cosmology of miracles (or "ecology of miracles," as Carey puts it relative to Hibernicus' writings),⁶⁴ the divine energies or primordial causes interweave the essence and phenomenon of a thing on the dynamically folded surfaces of Creation. The real essence in the world lies in inconceivable relationships and movements connecting with divine energies; any direct relationship of Creation with God in an objective linear sense is not possible, but an iconographic engagement of energies constitutes the interaction.

It is in this context that Eriugena in effect places his symbolic landscape tropes of the sea, Paradise, and a cosmically iconographic fourfold, in a "third world" of human being that is between being (physical environment) and non-being (dynamic theophany) as defined from the human perspective: a mediation

shaping landscape but resisting objectification of self. In Eriugena's *Nature*, human beings grow in the fold between theophany and physicality. "Observe the forms and beauties of sensible things, and comprehend the Word of God in them," he wrote in his homily on the prologue to the gospel of John. "You are not a substantial light, but only participate in the self-subsisting light."⁶⁵ This is the Eriugenian anti-*cogito* in effect, contrary to that of Descartes with its Augustinian roots: *I think therefore I know not what I am, except by participation in the larger context*. That larger transpersonal, quasi-deep-ecological sense of self-realization came however for Eriugena in terms of Cyrillian Christology and Trinitarianism, which "calls out to the whole race to become greater than they know themselves to be, and in this becoming, to become alive," in the words of patristic scholar John McGuckin.⁶⁶

Thus Eriugena's project reveals its parallels to modern environmental phenomenology, which, if not exact, highlight an affinity between his apophatic contra-*cogito* ethos and the revision of Descartes' formula that emerges from the twentieth-century work of the body-phenomenologist Maurice Merleau-Ponty: *I can therefore I am* (perhaps in patristic Christian terms: *I love therefore I am*).⁶⁷ Eriugena later in the same homily explicates the gospel statement that the true Light lights every human being who comes into the world, explaining that this refers to "those who, by the spiritual regeneration through grace that is given in baptism, enter the invisible world."⁶⁸ Thus for Eriugena, the hiddenness of the Otherworld is always already here in our landscape as human beings experiencing the world. To Eriugena, being and nonbeing entwine in the landscape of human life in cosmic experiential language that is iconographic. This explains the causality of human space that is and is not our own. Such landscape encompasses nature in both senses of the English term, essence and physical environment, but in both cases relationally, because of its embrace of the hidden.

That embrace of the hidden as natural emerges integrally from ascetic experience, which claimed to offer empirical therapy for the human soul within a contextualizing of cosmic landscape in the Irish Sea archipelago to which that desert ethic became transplanted. The symbolic confluence of sea, Paradise, and fourfold as a landscape of Creation there grew in part from foundational "postcolonial" hybridities in the Irish Sea cultural zone at the end of the Western Roman Empire, including a distinctive combination of decentralized polities and claims to long-term continuities of *Romanitas* in inculturated native Christianities.⁶⁹ The paradox of a decentralized social context combined with unifying imagery of culture helped shape the early Irish approach to place with its "resonance of space inside time, and of time inside space."⁷⁰ Orphic designs on floors of Romano-British villas, with apparently dual mythological-Christian meanings, exemplify the cultural hybridities of formative post-Roman Irish Sea literary traditions. Likely reflected on as declining villa centers gave birth to early church and monastic communities, they could have been one visual prompt both for adaptation of native mythology to Christian frameworks and also for the iconographic style of such syntheses, which flowed into Eriugena's culminating synthesis of Hiberno-Latin

hexaemeral exegesis.⁷¹ Almost contemporary with probably villa-related churches of Roman Britain (whence perhaps came Christianity to the Irish Sea zone, and at a time when trade still linked the region to the Byzantine Mediterranean), the sixth-century mosaic of the Transfiguration in the Sant' Apollinare in Classe at the old Byzantine enclave in Ravenna in Italy still suggests a relevant analogue to the narrative Otherworld: the symbolic merger of Pauline notions of divine energies, Cappadocian theology with desert existentialism, and a transfigured view of nature with spatial ramifications. Human beings, mountains, trees, and flowers are lit up by the radiance of the incarnate God whose essence is mystery.

From such a cosmopolitan but geographically grounded milieu of early Irish Sea literary cultures came a sense of landscape as miracle embodied finally in Eriugena's landscape tropes of Creation and their distinctive environmental ethos or habitat. O'Loughlin concludes that Eriugena's Hiberno-Latin writing, done in Francia under the patronage of Charles the Bald, reflects his background in Irish monastic scholarship, in terms of the latter's apophatic emphases on the distinction between God and Creation.⁷² But, as we have seen, that influence probably extended paradoxically as well to the *Periphyseon's* emphasis on engagement of the divine and physical nature. Eriugena's experience of exile (whether self-imposed for career reasons, caused by Viking disruptions, or perhaps both) echoed the earlier Irish ascetic theme of *peregrinatio*, a gloss on the desert ascetic term ξενитеια (unfamiliar to English speakers: *kseniteia*, "living as a stranger" or "unworldiness"—perhaps meaning as well outlandishness or otherworldiness and pilgrimage).⁷³ Such exile in Irish Sea cultural contexts brought a paradoxical removal from human social conventions coupled with a larger cosmic engagement. This archipelagic exile tradition provided yet another distinctive environmental contribution to the early Irish sense of landscape, with Irish exiles on other shores reflecting back on Ireland poetically as a type of "real" Otherworld in effect, an experience linking Bran and his crew in *Immram Brain* with Eriugena, the reputed (though doubtfully so) founder of Oxford but more definitely scholar in the service of Charles the Bald throughout the latter's somewhat roiled relations with a papacy in early modes of expansion.⁷⁴ In the coming together of all these networks—topographic, social, "empirically philosophical," and ascetic—there emerged textually an archipelagic sense of landscape as miracle, following religious scholar Philip Sheldrake's definition of the miraculous as the bringing together of physical and spiritual worlds.⁷⁵ More than anything else the *Periphyseon* arguably sought to shape textually a restoration of Eden-like wonder on earth, a wonder related to realizing the significance of larger contexts of life in the sparkle of divine energies in nature, and of desert-style listening and obedience in obligation to them as part of being human. Eriugena's sea and clouds, Paradise and tree, and tetramorph of Creation as a relational "third world," all shaped an additional form of Irish Sea Otherworld iconography in text, which survived philosophically in full if misunderstood form, though banned for centuries in Latin ecclesiastical realms of the late Middle Ages and beyond.

Rereading Otherworld Scholarship with the *Periphyseon*

Rereading modern scholarship on the Celtic Otherworld alongside Eriugena's cosmic-landscape symbolism can help in reassessing the emergence of a distinctive semiotic of nature in the early medieval Irish Sea region, its cosmopolitan components, and what from a modern perspective could be called its fundamentally non-Western attributes. At the same time, it also can contribute to understanding the synergy of native and Christian sources in early archipelagic literary cultures. To that end, let us consider (in a necessarily selective survey) both earlier interpretations of the Otherworld, and more recently nuanced approaches to the trope, before proceeding to a concluding comparison of Eriugena's approach to the cosmos with current paradigms in environmental philosophy and landscape studies.

Alwyn Rees and Brinley Rees in *Celtic Heritage* (1961) sought to map aspects of the Irish Sea overlay landscape in ways that highlight early Irish backgrounds to Eriugena's explication of an energized iconographic Nature. The Reeses' project drew on approaches of Georges Dumézil in Indo-European comparative mythology, and of the so-called nativist school of Celtic studies (emphasizing native origins of early Irish Sea tropes such as the Otherworld) exemplified by Proinsias Mac Cana's work.⁷⁶ The Reeses read the fantasy history of pre-Norman Ireland (especially the *Lebor Gabála Éirenn* or "book of the takings of Ireland") synchronically, linking the five archetypal provinces of that history (related to the four directions, the fifth or "center" being ambiguously described as east Munster or Mide/Meath) to the series of primordial invasions described in those accounts, and to the social-cultural qualities reputedly ascribed to each of those provinces (by an otherworldly giant at an assembly on the day of Christ's crucifixion) in an early text. Thus the West, Connacht, was associated with learning; the North, Ulster, with battle; the East, Leinster, with prosperity; the South, Munster, with music; and the Center with kingship. They also attempted to apply this fivefold frame to the other side of the Irish Sea, in Wales, by describing early schemes of fourfold division (including bishoprics) and five realms there, as well as a multiplicitous center of sorts at Pumlumon, mountain of "five peaks" and source of the Wye and Severn rivers. These mapping efforts highlighted a cultural overlay landscape fused with topographical geography in the two primary regions of south and north Wales.⁷⁷ Subsequent scholarship has increasingly emphasized the contribution of Christian literary culture to the type of native schemes articulated by the Reeses, and has attempted to place cultural developments in medieval Wales and Ireland more diachronically. But the Reeses suggested the close connection between physically experienced topography and environmental symbolism in early Irish culture.

Thomas O'Loughlin seeks other ways to chart the imaginative landscape of early Irish Sea culture, which he terms a "local theology" of Christianity. But his work nonetheless complements that of the Reeses, suggesting environmental connections between early Irish exegesis, Eriugena's Nature, and by implication the Otherworld. O'Loughlin outlines a schematic chart of hexaemeral Creation from the seventh-century Hiberno-Latin *Liber de Ordine*

Creaturarum.⁷⁸ That text seems to move through a kind of mapping, from the celestial to aerial demons, then the waters, then Paradise, then the terrestrial, then human nature, then fiery places beneath the earth, and finally the future life—perhaps moving cyclically as in Eriugena's *Return to God*, suggesting a transfiguration of the world (the *Liber de Ordine* projects the world's transformation rather than destruction). This sequence places Paradise as below water and the ocean, yet above the terrestrial world. Such layering of water above Paradise, itself in some sense above earth, would relate to archipelagic qualities of the overlay landscape, as well as to other patristic notions to be explored further in the next chapter. It conveys a sense of Paradise as overlaying earthly topography, and simultaneously its interpenetration of both the aerial waters and ocean. It places the surface of the earth (and human nature) in an atmosphere of both Paradise and aerial waters that actively are engaged with other levels of Creation.

Recent work to highlight this overlay landscape trope as a writing style includes a poetic-theoretical study by the Celticist Francesco Benozzo, who provides an extraordinary mapping of the middle Irish text *Buile Shuibhne* as "an unresolved icon of the world, a map in progress of reality that 'puts the space into movement.'"⁷⁹ However, his classification of the work as outside "Celtic" tradition suggests the potential anachronism of a postmodern "linguistic turn." Benozzo's full identification abstractly of landscape with tradition removes the ecocritical potential from his work, preventing it from fully exploring the mediating and fluid role of archipelagic landscape as embodying an overlap of topography and culture.

Scholarship on the "geography" of the overlay landscape in recent decades has included, in more conventionally Celticist terms, a significant exchange between Patrick Sims-Williams and John Carey on philological issues related to the term *Otherworld*. Sims-Williams posited (against a consensus of twentieth-century scholarship) that there was in Irish narrative a series of separate "Otherworlds" under individual mounds with "no clear notion of a single chthonic Otherworld."⁸⁰ He pointed out that the term *Otherworld* itself is a scholarly construction, in that

our useful, but probably misleading, modern term *Otherworld* seems to derive partly from unconscious analogy with the Christian dichotomy of *this world*; *the other world* . . . and partly from a calque on *orbis alius* in Lucan's account of the druidic doctrine that souls survived not in Hades but *orbe alio* . . . simply "another region" of the earth.⁸¹

Sims-Williams attempted to draw a distinction between Welsh construction of the *Otherworld* as "a single realm, which can be entered from many places on earth and sea," and Irish fairy mounds that are "independent kingdoms" like the tribal kingdoms of early Irish law.⁸² But his thorough examination of terminology seems to underemphasize Irish traditions of the whole space below the landscape as having been ceded to primordial divine beings,⁸³ or associations of the *Otherworld* with the sea or with Paradise in the aerial realms. It also doesn't

take into account the Eriugenan analogue posited here, in terms of the potential Creation-wide significance of the trope.

There is other convincing evidence in the Otherworld stories themselves as to why Sims-Williams' necessary caution on terminology should not be applied too broadly. The digging up of mounds around Ireland by Eochaid in his search for Étaín in *Tochmarc Étaíne*, and the awareness of their residents as to where she is likely to be found, implies a connection between Otherworld access points as much as a separation of them for mortals. Potential goddess figures named Medb are associated with mounds at Temair and Cruachan in different parts of Ireland, perhaps also implying beliefs of a connected Otherworld. Garrett Olmsted, in his attempted reconstruction of Celtic mythology, develops from linguistic study of names a unitary framework of mythic beliefs across Celtic areas of Europe that coexisted with particular attachments of such beliefs (and divine names) to certain smaller regions or places; in other words, a non-exclusivity of either local or more widespread mythical frameworks.⁸⁴ For example, Maponos is known from Romano-Celtic inscriptions in north Britain as well as from references in later Welsh writings as Mabon. Epona, the horse goddess known from continental Romano-Celtic inscriptions, also seems to be represented in symbolism attached to Rhiannon—who bears a name that is the title “great queen” in early Celtic—in later Welsh narratives where she is particularly associated with one mound, Gorsedd Arberth. There are also anthropological analogies from other cultures showing connected but particularized Otherworlds, including non-Augustinian Christian beliefs about the relation between divine energies in nature and Paradise, which are crucial to understanding the Otherworld as shaped in a Christian literary environment, the latter process having been emphasized in recent times by early Irish scholar Kim McCone among others.⁸⁵ Finally, in responding to Sims-Williams' philological arguments, Carey has noted that the Hiberno-Latin usage of *orbis* suggests “an idea that the supernatural reality revealed by journeys beneath or across earth or water is essentially unitary.”⁸⁶

Carey's studies have done the most to map, in non-schematized ways, through detailed philological, source, and comparative cosmological study, the Otherworld trope. His short work *A Single Ray of the Sun, Religious Speculation in Early Ireland* (2000) makes important connections between Eriugena, other early Irish cosmology projects, and Otherworld narratives, which had been largely undeveloped in Celtic studies for decades.⁸⁷ While Ann Dooley recently described the Irish Otherworld's demonic aspects⁸⁸ (such as a description of the *síd* next to the court at Cruachu as “the door of hell of Ireland”⁸⁹), which arguably form a part of the trope's destabilizing of anthropocentric landscape, the evidence as a whole complexly supports Carey's view of the Otherworld as often a quasi-Paradise synthesizing native pagan and biblical traditions. Carey describes demonic descriptions of the Otherworld as generally a later development, while noting the often roiled but symbiotic relationship between the Otherworld and Irish kingship.⁹⁰

Carey's work was involved in a fairly recent debate highlighting the ongoing and increasingly nuanced controversy over “Christian versus native” aspects of

the overlay landscape. McCone in his study of *Echtrae Chonnlai*, probably one of the earliest Irish otherworldly tales, argued for “uncompromisingly Christian aims” of the narrative’s “deliberate re-evaluation of a number of traditional terms and motifs associated with sovereignty and the Otherworld...its author stands revealed not as a benign ecumenist but as a determined proselytizer.”⁹¹ The story, in Carey’s more nuanced judgment, “confronts, not bypasses, the tension between old and new” faith traditions through less directly typological apposition of pagan and Christian belief.⁹² The decades-long fault-line in Celtic scholarship between nativist and non-nativist views is, however, partly resolvable by a spatial reading contextualized in iconographic ascetic desire and an archipelagic environment. Such experiential highlighting of the place-between in a pre-Scholastic semiotic of nature integrates allegorical and appositive views and approaches, as in the *Periphyseon*.

Carey’s authoritative studies also note frequent associations of the Otherworld with locations of seasonal fairs, a nomadic aspect of the Otherworld trope reminiscent of both the “smooth space” of energy flows on topography in Deleuze and Guattari’s geophilosophy and the earlier discussed fourfold of Celtic monastic temporality, echoed by Eriugena’s work.⁹³ Tribal assemblies were regularly held at legendary burial sites such as otherworldly mounds. Sacred festivals such as Samain were associated both with contact with the Otherworld and assemblies. The conjunction of human, physical environment, eternal and everlasting modes of temporality and nontemporality in desert asceticism (explored in the first chapter) helps to connect this social phenomenon with Eriugena’s intellectual crafting of the interrelation of divine energies, nonbeing, human being, and the physical world in his fourfold of Nature. Carey also insightfully draws associations between the judicial functions of the assemblies and the grants of “truth and peace” from the Otherworld to kings in stories. He cites suggestions of sacral union between king and tribe at assemblies as a bonding between ruler and land also relating to Otherworld traditions. And the Otherworld’s “freedom from sexual anxiety,” either in terms of “guiltless sexual freedom or as beatific chastity,” also characterizes both the conflicting reported sexual license and sexual segregation found at various festivals in early Ireland.⁹⁴ Carey concludes,

At the *oenach* [tribal assembly] the people convened in a sacred place which became, while the assembly lasted, itself a reflection of the just, peaceful, abundant, timeless, and placeless dwelling of the gods—and not a reflection merely, for within the ritual boundaries of time and space the Otherworld itself was in some sense present.⁹⁵

That connection between assemblies and Otherworld also potentially shows affinities to Christian liturgical experience in an early medieval context emphasizing the Eucharist as mysterious event, in a mode of empirical symbolism also evident in the *Periphyseon*’s fourfold.⁹⁶ The Christian Church unified the living and the dead in a timeless congregation, especially at the time of festivals but also

in the liturgy and liturgical cycles of the calendar. It brought with it a glimpse of Paradise as reported famously by the non-Christian Kievan ambassadors to the liturgy at the Hagia Sophia, or intimated in the description of the church at Kildare in Cogitosus' account of St. Brigit's life.⁹⁷ As in parallel development of iconography in the Eastern Mediterranean, material elements of the artwork and the work of the artist are seen together as redemptive, and the realization of self through imagination is in relationship enveloped in physical environment rather than "in" the artwork.⁹⁸ In the words of the eighth-century iconodule St. John of Damascus, "Is not the ink in the Most Holy Gospel Book matter?"⁹⁹ In the same way, even the fallen material world and pre-Christian ancestry associated with it are charged with meaning in the landscapes of early Welsh and Irish narratives as well as in Eriugena's cosmology, and recent environmental-phenomenological approaches to archaeology around the Irish Sea can provide insights to the literary trope from physical evidence as well. The archaeologist-phenomenologist Christopher Tilley describes the Neolithic mounds of Wales, for example, in terms of mapping and shaping of landscape as embedded memory. They visually draw out "the connections between people and the land"¹⁰⁰ in transformative relationship, establishing "symbolic reference and ritually important ceremonial meeting-points on paths of movement, drawing attention to the relationship between local groups and the landscape—itself already a constructed symbolic form of named places, pathways and significant locales from the Mesolithic onwards."¹⁰¹ The physical inscriptions on the land of those earlier times became focal points of the later textual Otherworld trope. This becomes a type of inscription of the land, a geography of desire, similar to that practiced by Neolithic mound builders and the artisans of early Christian monuments in Western Britain and Ireland.

Archipelagic Perspectives on Contemporary Landscape Studies

Any discussion of the Celtic Otherworld as part of a larger environmental worldview including the *Periphyseon* must find connections to recent approaches to landscape and spirituality difficult, because of deep structural shifts in perceptions of the world and self implicit in the subsequent emergence of Western culture. For example, the patristic motif of Paradise as a mountain encompassing earth, analogous to the Otherworld trope, illustrates the obstacles in applying Mircea Eliade's emphases on *axis mundi* and a binary of sacred and profane to early Irish Sea cultural landscape. Postmodern spatial theories, in their focus on issues of power and social identity, and plurality of place, also have tended until recently to skirt ethical concerns of environmental philosophy that could connect to early medieval approaches. Anthropologist Roy Rappaport, in critiquing Eliade's emphases, noted that "to act as if the world is constituted of ecosystems, or the one encompassing ecosystem that some call Gaia is, in some degree, performative tending to bring into being and to preserve the form of organization it assumes."¹⁰² But Rappaport's summative *Ritual and Religion in the Making of*

Humanity (1999) does not develop a theoretical framework that can fully address the type of landscape–narrative found in the early Irish Sea province. Rappaport’s discussion of Logos and Logoi in relation to ecological narratives places the terms in a quantitative—not qualitative—relationship. In his view, there simply are many Logoi (non-italicized and capitalized as a fully “Englished” term), any one of which is a Logos in effect. By contrast, in Maximus’ schema, so influential on Eriugena’s *Periphyseon*, and drawing on the wider range of meanings of *logos* in Greek, the *Logos* offers an overall cosmic framework, in effect a larger reality or landscape as reference horizon, amid the dynamically subverting identification of *Logos* with *logoi*. Lacking such a larger cosmic frame, Rappaport’s sense of a “ritually regulated ecosystem”¹⁰³ can reflect a scientism missing an ethical component. His is not the post-secular “practice of place” that religious scholars such as Philip Sheldrake seek.

Sheldrake’s work in Christian spatial theory emphasizes the need for an underlying baseline emphasis on “the vocabulary of the particular” that is helpful in thinking about the Otherworld’s relation to topography and of Eriugena’s cosmology to particular beings.¹⁰⁴ But early Irish Sea landscape–narratives suggest even more a “vocabulary of the relational.” Sheldrake relies on the late medieval philosopher John Duns Scotus in discussing how the latter’s thirteenth-century Franciscan understanding of *thisness* went beyond the Scholastic Western norm of *analogia* in considering nature (and by extension landscape) directly, as a basis for understanding spatiality. Yet Sheldrake does not mention the radically metonymic view of Creation in Eriugena’s discourse. And Duns Scotus still advocated a Scholastic sense of universal space expressive of interiorized human subjectivity that is, despite his emphasis on “thisness,” evident in his advocacy of the transcendent doctrine of Immaculate Conception.¹⁰⁵

Recent approaches to space as performative ritual perhaps reach closest toward the ethos of early Irish Sea tropes of nature. Religion scholar Catherine Bell’s sense of ritual was rooted in a mutually reciprocal shaping of self and environment. Her concern with the way in which today “global discourse on ritual . . . is being constructed not without violence, loss, and deeply rooted assumptions of cultural hegemony” evoked an added ethical dimension. She critiqued Western scholarship as involving an “interest in transcending the particular [that] suggests a fundamental drive toward world transformation and self-determination . . . in terms that extend our historical experiences as nearly universal.”¹⁰⁶ Extending Bell’s implicit call for refocusing on the particular in a global frame, religious scholar Douglas Burton-Christie’s recent work on spirituality and space suggests an analogue to the Otherworld in a sense of immanent transcendence that is “ultimate ground.” He says such a sense of place “demands that we take seriously the work of becoming intimate with and articulate about the proximate, local, and particular,” “that we find a way of binding together the seen and the unseen, the exterior and interior worlds in a single continuous movement.”¹⁰⁷ This realizes what Bell described in her work as the conjoining of body-making–ritual and ritual-making–body.¹⁰⁸ It distantly evokes Irish ascetics standing hands up-raised in prayer in the sea, with the Otherworld narrative “the place-between” that realizes landscape. However, in helpfully surveying *Logos* and *logoi* as key to

a Christian environmental practice, Burton-Christie too fails to make a connection with the Maximian-Eriugenan tradition.¹⁰⁹

Sensitivity to a combination of the alterity (by Western standards) of space, time, and symbolism in Irish Sea texts, new cross-disciplinary approaches, and the bodily focus of early Irish Sea literary culture, all suggest that Bell's concept of embodied ritualization can help in rereading the Otherworld and related cosmological narratives environmentally. Ritualization for Bell is "a strategic way of acting...rooted in a distinctive interplay of a socialized body and the environment it structures."¹¹⁰ She described ritualization's "external strategy" as how cultural ritual "acts to shift the very status and nature of the problem [of a society's relation to its environment] into terms that are endlessly retranslated in strings of deferred schemes," as in Irish Sea symbolism of nature in archipelagic terms of the Otherworld. This potentially physically connective aspect of narrative entwines with what she called ritualization's "internal strategy" of shaping the subject.¹¹¹ Ethics of Cassianic desert asceticism could constitute such ritualization shaping self, but in a non-Western "external strategy." Indeed, if there are different paradigms for the operation of ritualized landscapes in different cultural epochs, it is possible that the transformations of our own world-age by environmental crises can find insights into surviving the transition by rereading alternative narratives for the cultural "performance" of landscape. This potentially could push out the performative boundaries of Bell's analysis to integrate textual space more fully with bodily empiric psychosomatic and ecological practices in terms of ecosemiotics and ecopoetics. This requires reflecting on why some narratives that span text and society can cue a heightened performative connection between hierarchies of culture and the "real world of experience," as Bell terms it, while others do not.¹¹² The next chapter attempts such an examination more particularly in relation to textual landscapes of ascetic martyrdom in early Ireland.

In any case, the pre-national, decentralized context of early medieval Irish Sea societies (despite some relevance to post-national aspirations of today's world) also complicates applications of recent theories of spatial organization to these texts. Even Antonio Sennis' observation, based on Carolingian-and-later monasticism in Western Europe, that monastic worldviews drew "on their vocation to turn space into memory, memory into texts, texts into power," fails to address decentralized Irish Sea monastic cultures fully.¹¹³ Memory simultaneously could be bodily, topographical, oral, and textual, with one mode not clearly originating from the other but all in flux. The work of Deleuze and Guattari supports the environmental relevance of such rhizomic *desire*, more than Sennis' category of *power*, in reading the Otherworld. That trope's overlay landscape, reflecting both multiple competing social hierarchies and resistance to colonization, together with mutually reciprocal hierarchies of *Logos* and *logoi*, also disrupts postmodern paradigms of social power emerging from critiques of the modern. While nuanced melding of ecocritical and phenomenological approaches to Irish Sea cultural landscape can draw in a qualified way on the spatial turn of postmodern geography, based on Henri Lefebvre's sense of space as socially produced, the application requires bodily ecological context beyond a postmodern "linguistic turn."¹¹⁴

Indeed, perhaps the most important of the shifts in Western culture obscuring perceptions today of the larger environmental outlook of early Irish Sea cultures remains the intellectual sea change in the emerging West's model of enlightenment, from emphasis on a therapeutic *sapientia* in psychosomatic *ascesis* (in effect hesychasm), to the conceptual *scientia* of Scholasticism.¹¹⁵ The socially spatial component of such change is seen in movement away from a focus on the desert as the physically lived landscape of Christian sacredness (adapted to the islands and seas of Europe's Atlantic archipelago), to the urban (and interiorized) cathedral, with incorporation of the desert as a virtual "ideological scenario" into cloisters that are the ancestors of modern academic quadrangles.¹¹⁶ As Burton-Christie puts it, in terms applicable to Irish Sea landscape-narratives:

Interpretation and misinterpretation of Scripture in the desert had little to do with doctrinal orthodoxy; rather, the aim of interpretation was moral purity and integrity and through this, the experience of God... The ultimate expression of the desert hermeneutic was a *person, one who embodied the sacred texts and who drew others out of themselves into a world of infinite possibilities*.¹¹⁷

Recent efforts to adapt a modern parallel sense of that earlier outlook (in vastly different circumstances) include emphases on space as reconciliation, in nurturing a sense of landscape that is sacramental in exhibiting a transcendent immanence respecting both particularness and its connectivities.¹¹⁸ Increasing efforts to connect developments in social-system theory, geophilosophy and neural sciences with the humanities also raise the prospect of a more rigorous readaptation of personal ecological ethics to spatial theory and landscape-narrative. As Thompson has noted: "The individual human subject is the enculturated bodily subject. In this way, the knowing and feeling subject is not the brain in the head, or even the brain plus the body, but the socially and culturally situated person, the enculturated human being."¹¹⁹ To this, his discussion of ecopoiesis would add "ecologically situated person." Thompson refers to ecopoiesis as a networked sensibility of the autopoietic (internally self-produced) structure of life, in which the evolutionary unit is the ecosystem.¹²⁰ Such approaches reflect discoveries of how mirror neurons "appear to form a cortical system that matches the observation of motor actions performed by another individual with performance of the same type of actions by oneself."¹²¹ The emphasis again is on "the deep continuity of mind and life."¹²²

Indeed, many people today concerned with the objectifying limits of science and with environmental crises as cultural phenomena are looking toward nonscientific ecological practices for alternative solutions, an effort resulting in new discourses on the borders of sciences and the humanities, while also suggesting the relevance of premodern ecocritical study.¹²³ Such efforts go beyond emphases on "creation care" in contemporary Western Judaeo-Christian theological studies, toward establishing a norm of experientially personal relationship with other beings (and nonbeing) that in the past was often segregated as mystical or aberrant rather than sacramental or salvational.¹²⁴

Such a reintegration often includes seeking an empirical “lived body” spatial practice, an ascetic aesthetic. Thompson has attempted to establish a counter-metaphor to the biologist Richard Dawkins’ view of the environment as following coded genetic instructions organismically. The former’s metaphor of “laying down a path in walking” emphasizes no separation between plan and development. This reflects Thompson’s view that “organism and environment construct each other in development and evolution.”¹²⁵ Evolution is a tapestry “in which conservation and innovation, permanence and change, and necessity and contingency are thoroughly interwoven.” Biological structures often assumed to be *analogous* (independent but similar) are *homologous* (related at deep levels).¹²⁶ Odd and neglected echoes of European premodernity reemerge here. Differences between Thompson’s neurophenomenology and Dawkins’ DNA-based “genocentric” view oddly parallel those between Eriugena’s divine energies and Scholastic emphases on *analogia*. From this longer perspective of Western intellectual history, Augustinian intelligent design (with seminal causes and ex nihilo Creation operating like an archetypal computer program) and implicitly teleological modern scientific cosmology (natural selection emerging from genetic frames tracing back to the Big Bang) unexpectedly show parallels to one another to which the Eriugenian approach still offers alternative insights.¹²⁷

A more environmentally based view of evil in that alternative Eriugenian tradition also involves a greater positive engagement with physical nature. The concept of sin in non-Augustinian Christianity involved spiritually “missing the mark,” or Greek *amartia*, a lack of natural growth in realization of self in empathy, an objectification of life equivalent to idolatry.¹²⁸ This contrasts with Augustine’s emphasis on identifying transcendent nonbeing (nonetheless associated with the physical world) with evil, under the label of Original Sin. The latter view contributed to a disparaging Western sense of experiencing uncontrollably hidden aspects of ecological nature only as abjection, lacking realization that engagement with that hiddenness is essential for self-realization in deep ecology. At the same time, the patristic view of evil (apart from Augustine) did not see humans as having been created perfect and then fallen in sin—but rather created naturally good although immature on a dynamic trajectory of potential growth in the environment. A related creative view of nonbeing (implicated in desert asceticism) evokes in part the ancient Greek philosophical term *aoratos* for void, as used in a rich sense of potentiality in the Septuagint account of the Creation (Gen. 1.2). This sense of creative nonbeing also resonates with *chora*, a Greek term sometimes translated “space” or “land” (and used in Kristevan theory for the pre-symbolic semiotic stage), associated in the early Middle Ages with the Virgin Mary’s womb containing the cosmos as the living tabernacle identified with the earth.¹²⁹ The cosmos contains her, she is overshadowed by divine presence, mystery, and energies; yet in another sense she brings those forth. The cosmos is in this sense the dynamic Burning Bush of the Sinai desert, a mystery not consumable but identified with her, a dynamic yet personal sense of Creation.

The distinctive contribution of early Christianity around the Irish Sea (expressed in different ways in both Eriugena's symbolism and in Otherworld texts) to ecocritical discourse was an environmental narrative with such a personally relational and cosmic sense of the corporeality of a Creator imbuing and interlacing the *logoi* of Creation—an incarnational discourse of nonbeing embracing humanity, nature, and the spiritual realm. The modern alternative is the abstract personalism (and solipsism) of the homogeneous "story-shaped world" of global consumerism with its odd parallels to late-medieval feudalism. Wendell Berry articulates well the radical impersonality of corporate globalization when he writes:

The folly at the root... began with the idea that a corporation should be regarded, legally, as "a person"... the limitless destructiveness... comes about precisely because a corporation is *not* a person... It does not arrive, as most persons finally do, at a realization of the shortness and smallness of human lives; it does not come to see the future as the lifetime of the children and grandchildren of anybody in particular. It can experience no personal hope or remorse, no change of heart. It cannot humble itself. It goes about its business as if it were immortal...¹³⁰

Such is the framework of "realistic" landscape-narrative today: the *whoness* of the *what*, rather than the *whatness* of the *who*. By evoking an alternative range of narratives of personally cosmic connectivity, such as those of Eriugena and the early Irish Sea, in a dynamic sense of *habitus* contiguous to many cultures, it is possible to imagine new environmental engagement in our current world, through reshaped modern narratives of the land, to open a window in our simulacra for Noah to let out the dove. This potential suggests new opportunities for future environmental literary studies.

Dostoevsky (whose own fiction spanned premodern and postmodern traditions) evoked in his "fantasy realism"—the "dialogical materialism" celebrated by Mikhail Bakhtin—a marginalized but powerful ecological energy in personally relational place, similar to the Irish Sea landscape of Creation in suggesting an apophatic non-Western geography of desire.¹³¹ His character Marya Timofeevna Lebyadkin in *Demons*, whose role is like that of a medieval holy fool or sacred clown of indigenous cultures, at her Russian women's monastery tells of how "in my opinion, God and nature are all the same." She could be quoting Eriugena's *Periphyseon* and in both traditions be understood in the context of divine energies running through the physical world, the essence of God being wholly unknown. Her dialogue with another holy fool echoes, via Russian tradition, St. Ephrem's fourth-century ascetic view of Creation and its parallels with the Celtic Otherworld, while reaching toward current ecological discourse as well:

"Yes," she said, "the Mother of God is the moist earth, and therein lies a great joy for man. And every earthly sorrow and every earthly tear is a joy for us; and when you have watered the earth under you a foot deep with your tears, then you will at once rejoice over everything. And there will be no more, no more of your grief from then on," she said, "and such," she said, "is the prophecy"... After that

I began to kiss the earth when I prayed, each time I bowed to the ground, I kissed it and wept. And . . . there's no harm, no harm in these tears; and even if you have no grief, your tears will flow all the same from joy alone.¹³²

It is to this relation in early Irish Sea landscapes between bodily asceticism and veneration of earth as cocreator—the lived body in Eriugena's secret folds of Nature—that we now turn.



The Hill of Slane, where St. Patrick is said to have lit the Paschal fire that proved the undoing of the druids of the High King at nearby Tara, with scenery showing natural colors associated with the term *glas* linking sky, land, and sea. (Author's photo.)

CHAPTER 4

COLORS OF THE WINDS, LANDSCAPES OF CREATION

After rereading the Otherworld trope and Eriugena's philosophy in terms of connections between environment and text in early Irish Sea cultures, examining the Irish color term *glas* in two other literary tropes can highlight environment as text in archipelagic ascetic practices. The colors of the winds and colors of martyrdom in early Irish tradition illustrate how color can textually and iconographically express the fluidity of the boundary between body and idea, human and nonhuman, physical and spiritual. In them, color becomes a metonymic expression of landscape, linking the visual and the textual. The primary overlap between the two tropes is found in environmental and cultural associations of the term *glas*, best translated as "the color of sky in water."¹ *Glas* is the color of a southwest wind, from the quadrant of Ireland oriented by tradition toward the Otherworld and by geography toward the ocean. *Glas* is also the color of a nonviolent ascetic "martyrdom" involving strict self-discipline, *glasmartre*. The latter encompasses specific bodily and environmental practices, and in them its color evokes biblical aerial waters and clouds associated both with Eriugena's cosmology and hesychastic-style exercises linking the body and physical world with the uncreated light of divine energies. These motifs of the winds and martyrdom, in the relation of shared colors, evoke the physical context of the Irish Sea archipelago itself.

Glas had a distinctive range of often environmental related meanings including what in modern English would be termed green, grey, and blue, and was used for descriptions of everything from pale complexion and foreigners to tears, shiny metal, fresh vegetation, natural-colored wool, ice, the sea, and fog.² A "pre-color," it hinges on the meaning "shining,"³ as the Celticist Tatyana A. Mikhailova suggests. Its otherworldly associations, tonal spectrum, and focus on value of brightness evoke a parallel with the active radiant background (usually golden) of Byzantine iconography cited by Gilles Deleuze, in which "we no longer know where the background ends and the forms begin."⁴

Incarnational Christian visual theory of iconography, emerging in the early Middle Ages, involved such a participatory sense of "theology in colors," reflected

in both the tropes involving *glas* discussed here and what we shall see is the related Otherworld trope.⁵ Experiencing nature as icon in “color theology” reflected how, in the words of the Christian Dionysius (a prime source for Eriugena’s cosmic ecology),

it is not possible for the mind [*nous*, or energy of the heart], as it exists among us, to be lifted up to that immaterial imitation and contemplation of the heavenly hierarchies, if it could not have material things to lead it by the hand according to its capacity—accounting beautiful appearances to be pictures of the unseen seemliness, and sensory fragrances to be reflections of noetic influence.⁶

In Dionysian-Eriugenan theology, the imaging of the divine energies in nature as relational experience entwined language and color.⁷ *Colores* or colors in Latin rhetorical mnemonics of Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages were ornaments that activated *memoria* within the *ductus* or main flow of the route of the text.⁸ But in the early Irish color motifs they were allied to shaping verbal images as environmentally iconographic, more experiential than mimetic. The Dionysian writer articulated the cosmic hierarchies as variegated in integration of plurality and unity, human and the divine, expressed in and by the colorful world of the physical.⁹ Color, in texts written and visual, was no bridge to the ultimate essence of reality in God’s mysterious essence, but was an iconographic catalyst to participation with that mystery’s energies on earth through embodied imagination. Color in text functions in this way as metonym in iconographic textual style.¹⁰ Luce Irigaray unpacks this fluidly empathetic environmental effect when she writes of how “any color is more in the mode of participation than of the solitary emergence of the concept.”¹¹

The Irish colors of the winds show this environmentally when read in light of the Otherworld trope and Eriugena’s philosophy. The wind colors survive in the ninth–tenth-century vernacular devotional text *Saltair na Rann*¹² [*Psalter of the Quatrains* or *Versified Psalter*], and in other texts as well.¹³ Their inclusion in both an exegetical devotional poem and in the framing of a native law tract perhaps suggests some common cultural framing of both cosmology and ancestral law. The motif traces its origins to a synthesis of prophetic writings in Jewish scripture (Zech. 6.2–5),¹⁴ Classical models,¹⁵ probably indigenous mythology, and, as argued later, early Irish geography. It parallels wind-color traditions in other indigenous cultures, including Native American traditions.¹⁶ The description of the winds in the first canto is prefaced by earlier quatrains (lines 37–40) setting forth a cosmological view of the relation between aerial waters, atmosphere, and earth¹⁷:

Ri rodelb dluma iartain
hura coderb imthaimain,
rith roseim osbith, buaid nhgle,
indaeor uair uscide.

[The king skillfully shaped (following the making of the world)
fair clouds around the earth,
lightly coursing and overlying the world, a sparkling crown—
the cold watery air.]

Christ is then said to form and arrange in beauty the wind colors (lines 57–80):

INgel, incorcarda glan,
inglass, induaine allmar,
inbuidi, inderg, derb dána,
nisgaib fergg frisodála.

INdub, indliath, indalad,
intemen, inchiar chálad,
indodar, doirchi datha,
nidat soirchi sogabtha.

Ri rosordaig oscachmaig
na *ocht* fogaetha feochrai,
rodelb cenditha, dín saeth,
cricha nacethri príngaeth.

Anair incorcra glanbda,
andess ingel gle, amra,
atuaid indub gailbech, *grach*,
aniar indodur engach.

INderg, inbuidi 'male,
eter gil ocus corcrai,
indúani, inglass, croda (?)¹⁸ lir,
eter huidir isglegil.

INdliath, inchiar, *grainne* anhgair,
eter huidir iscirduib,
intemen, indalad tair,
eter duib ocus corcair.

[The white, the bright purple,
the blue-grey-green, the mighty green,
the yellow, the red—sure in skill,
no wrath comes among their good assemblies.

The black, the grey, the mottled,
the dark, the hard jet,
the dun—gloomy colors
are not radiant or so graspable.

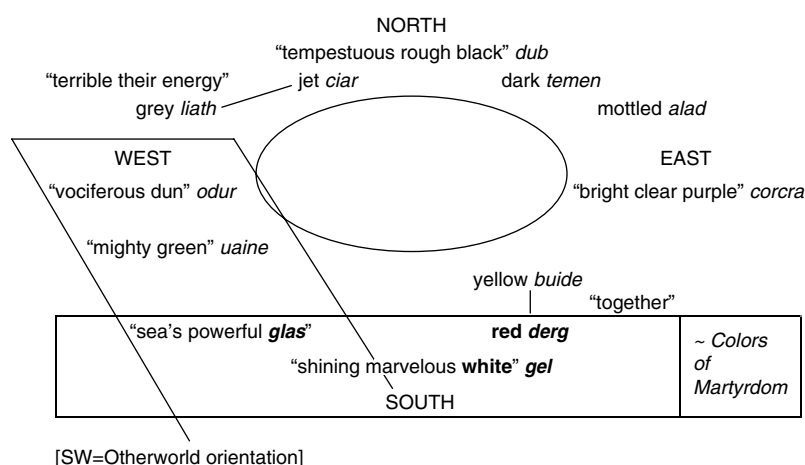
The king ordained overlying every plain
the eight untamed winds in-between;
He shaped, without flaws, defence from hardships,
the boundaries of the four chief winds:

From the east the bright clear purple,
from the south the shining marvelous white,
from the north the tempestuous rough black,
from the west the vociferous dun.

The red and the yellow together
between white and purple;
the green, and the sea's powerful blue-grey-green,
between dun and shining white.

The grey, the jet, terrible their energy,
 between dun and jet-black;
 the dark and the mottled, in the east,
 between black and purple.]

The description yields the following chart of the “wind-color wheel,” in which the color categories of Irish ascetic martyrdom to be discussed later (red, white, and *glas* or blue-grey-green) closely approximate the southernmost triad of wind colors (the difference being that the term *gel* is used in the latter instead of *bán*, both meaning white).¹⁹ The colors that overlap the tropes formed the bright spectrum on the wheel.²⁰



Now, the wind-color wheel had particular environmental orientations contextualizing the martyrdom colors on its southern tier. Carey notes that the organizing of the wind colors makes sense as a kind of cosmic map related to colors of light, with *corcur* (a crimson purple) in the direction of the dawn, *dun* in that of sunset, north as black, and south as white.²¹ It has also been pointed out by Mikhailova that the lack of light or “real color” in the north could be reflective of the boundary of spectrum perception in human eyesight and physical properties of light. This indicates perhaps not only the observational acuity of early Irish writers but also early-medieval Christian beliefs (exemplified in Eriugena’s work) about the human mediating Creation and the divine. Mikhailova has noted that the Irish Twelve Winds involve a sequence of colors corresponding both to the modern color spectrum and to the diurnal cycle.²² To such helpful associations, also being developed by Carey in relation to Indo-European analogues,²³ can be added specific connections with Irish climate and geography, including the description of watery air in the prefatory quatrains, and orientation of the directions of light to Ireland’s position in the northern hemisphere.

The wind-color wheel also forms a cultural region overlapping geography. The north with its light-deprived colors was associated not only with harsh weather, but also in early Irish traditions with sorcery and the devil (and perhaps the Vikings),²⁴ and fittingly some scholarship places the probable writing of *Saltair na Rann* in the south of Ireland among the brighter colors.²⁵ To the west, Carey notes that *Tech Duinn* was the island of the dead placed in the western sea in early Irish lore,²⁶ ruled by the lord Donn, whose name is “also a color adjective nearly synonymous with *odor* (dun), identified with Satan in one early Irish text.”²⁷ *Corcra* to the east was given royal connotations elsewhere.²⁸ *Saltair na Rann* itself overtly identifies Christ as cosmic king. This was also the direction from which Ireland historically was Christianized and the direction of the Holy Land and (according to medieval Christians) of Christ’s Second Coming.²⁹ Further, the *Saltair* divides the wind-colors into those lying from dun to red on the southern tier of the circle—of which it says (in Carey’s translation) “no discord comes between them in their fair assemblies”—and those along the northern tier from dun to the northeastern quadrant, of which it says “the dark colors are not bright or easy to embrace.” Purple in the east is excluded from this evaluative division, perhaps given special cosmic significance by its identification with the coming Christ, and chromatically mediating bright vibrancy and dark texture. The Rees brothers associated the northern half of Ireland’s medieval cultural map in native tradition with heroics, exemplified by the Ulster Cycle,³⁰ and the bright, embraceable southern colors also could mark the inversion of an older imagined prioritizing of warrior ethics, as a result of Christianization.

The southern orientation of the cosmic wind-colors of “bright embracing” may first reflect identification of the sun with Christ, going back to fifth-century writings of the British Gildas and of St. Patrick, and elaborated upon in later accounts of Patrick’s life.³¹ This is also generally the direction of the old Western Empire and of Rome, the seat of Peter’s successor and the papal and ancient patriarchal seat of Western Christendom, as well as of Spain, an early source of literary influences and reputed ancestral migrations.³² And the southern tier’s orientation toward southern Ireland could type Christian society as a whole, as is further suggested by colors parallel to those of the martyrdoms, and analogous to those that the Indo-Europeanist Georges Dumézil associated with a primordial tripartite social structure, also related by Eric Hamp to Celtic archaic color schemes.³³ Priestly (white), warrior (red), agricultural (blue or black)³⁴—this triad of colors also parallels substantially the colors of the three cosmic sails referred to in an early dialogue between an otherworldly youth and St. Columcille.³⁵ Here reference is made to the yellow sail that carries, the *glas* sail that drowns, and the red sail “under which bodies were conceived,” which Carey speculates may relate to a pre-Christian sense of cyclical rebirth.³⁶ *Glas* in this spectrum of overlapping meanings and directions would relate to earthly death melding with the sea and agriculture in the hidden earth—all figuratively appropriate for ascetic *glas* martyrdom and identified with the Otherworld of the southwest.

Indeed, a significant link between the colors of the winds and the color of ascetic martyrdom in relation to the Otherworld trope and elemental geography of the archipelago lies to the southwest. The southwest of Ireland, traditionally

associated with the Otherworld³⁷ as the quadrant of the island leaning farthest into the ocean in early maps, is identified through its winds with green-blue colors, including *glas*, explicitly associated in the *Saltair* text with the sea. *Glas* is also attested as part of a legal term for exile from local identity-defining political communities, in the phrase *cú glas* to describe an outcast, with associations to monasticism and the Irish tradition of ascetic exile.³⁸ The west-southwestern winds are the only secondary wind-colors in *Saltair na Rann* emphasized by individual adjectival epithets, existing in a kind of color transition between the brightness of south and east, and the direction associated with death to the west. Such a combined chromatic and geographic orientation may be associated with an Otherworld that in early Irish narratives often seems to be a kind of transitional state between native pagan and Christian beliefs about Paradise and after-life, here also explicitly related to the sea.

The combination of environmental, spiritual, and social associations of *glas* on this wind-color wheel is further highlighted by the apparent relation of the southernmost colors of the winds to early Irish color categories for martyrdom or witness. That relationship clarifies the function of the ambiguously interpreted *glasmartre*, or martyrdom in the color of *glas*, described in the so-called *Cambrai Homily* in the following text³⁹:

Filus trechenelae martre daneu adrímiter ar cruich du duiniu, ma desgné : bāan-martre ocus glasmartre ocus dercmartre . issí in bānmartre do duiniu, intain scaras ar Dea fri cach reet caras cení césa aini na laubir n-oco . is sí ind glasmartre dó, intain scaras fria thola leol céssas saíthor i-ppennit ocus aithrigi . is sí in dercmartre dó, foditu chruche ocus diorcne ar Chríst, amail tondechomnuichur dundaib abstolaib, oc ingrimmim inna clóen ocuis oc forcetul recto Dée . congaibetar inna tre chenél martre-so issnib colnidib tuthégot dagathrigi, scarde fria tola, céste saíthu, tuesmot a fuil i n-aíni ocuis 7 i laubair ar Chríst.⁴⁰

[Now there are three kinds of martyrdom that are counted as a cross to man, that is to say, white martyrdom, and blue-grey-green martyrdom, and red martyrdom. This is the white martyrdom to man, when he separates for the sake of God from everything he loves, although he does not suffer fasting and labor thereat. This is the blue-grey-green martyrdom to him, when by means of them [fasting and labor] he separates from his desires, or suffers toil in penance and repentance. This is the red martyrdom to him, endurance of a cross or destruction for Christ's sake, as happened to the apostles in the persecution of the wicked and in teaching the law of God. These three kinds of martyrdom are comprised in the carnal men who resort to good repentance, who separate from their desires, who pour forth their blood in fasting and in labor for Christ's sake.]

Clare Stancliffe seemed finally to peg down a background and meaning for *glasmartre* as “blue martyrdom” in a landmark article published a generation ago, in which she successfully showed a likely lineage of the term from Latin Christian literature and from the analogue *iacinthus*, referring to the pallid faces of penitents in effect “turning blue” (a patristic form of “the blues”).⁴¹ However, a reexamination of recent scholarship, use of a more cosmopolitan range of patristic texts reflecting Ireland's link to monastic and exegetical traditions of

the Eastern Mediterranean, and the environmental associations of the colors, all suggest a richer, extended complex of meaning for *glasmartre*—one that is relevant to understanding environmental relations of this complex of texts in terms of bodily asceticism. Earlier editions of the *Cambrai Homily* text implied that white martyrdom indeed had involved fasting and labor, like *glasmartre*. More recently, Próinséas Ní Chatháin's correction based on the manuscript demonstrates that the elements of asceticism involving fasting and labor, which Stancliffe and others had thought to be associated with white martyrdom, were not so included with it.⁴² Thus *glasmartre* alone of the three colored martyrdoms is now seen to be associated with the specific physical practices of asceticism and repentance.

In an article dated just before Stancliffe's study, with significance for this environmental investigation, Pádraig P. Ó Néill pointed out that the term *glasmartre* could not be associated exclusively with penance, since on the basis of the *Cambrai Homily* text it was associated with "two distinct actions" or alternatives, namely penance and "separation from one's desires."⁴³ In supporting this point, Ó Néill further cited one of the Latin analogues likewise examined by Stancliffe, namely a text on the different colors of Scripture from the eighth-century Hiberno-Latin collection known as *Catéchèses Celtiques*, which identifies *iacinthina* with martyrdom that involves a twofold effect: "desire for heaven" (*caeli desiderium*) and "abstinence" (*abstinentia*).⁴⁴ In other words, Ó Néill notes, more than one form of "mortification" seems covered by these Latin and Irish terms consolidated in *glasmartre*. He suggests that this in turn may relate to a merging of bodily ascetic meanings for the colors green and blue from separate Latin and Irish terms into the Irish color term *glas*, in a line of exegesis ultimately traceable to explication of precious stones adorning the foundations of the New Jerusalem in the Apocalypse of St. John.⁴⁵ This was reflected in Bede's *Explanatio Apocalypsis*, which identified the stone *hyacinthus* (again related to the color-adjective *iacinthina*, identified by Stancliffe and others as a Latin analogue for *glas*) with the heavens, following St. Andrew of Caesarea's fifth- or sixth-century exegesis.⁴⁶ In the fourth century, another Greek exegete, Evagrius Ponticus (an important influence on John Cassian's transmission of desert asceticism to the West, and on Maximus the Confessor's cosmology as a source for the Hiberno-Latin writings of Eriugena), wrote, in a passage that also influenced other patristic writers: "When the mind, unclothing itself of the old man, puts on that of grace, it sees in the time of prayer its state like that of a sapphire or of the heavenly color. This state Scripture calls the place of God, seen by the elders of Israel on Mt. Sinai."⁴⁷ St. Andrew's exegesis subsequently identified both the sapphire and the jacinth (hyacinth) stones of the New Jerusalem with the azure color of the sky.⁴⁸ Indeed, the apparent semantic relation of *glas* to the color of the sky echoes biblical texts by St. Paul, linking interrelated imagery of cloud, heaven, and sea to baptism, the Eucharist, the divine glory on earth, and the approaching end of time⁴⁹: "our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea. And all in Moses were baptized, in the cloud, and in the sea: And did all eat the same spiritual food, And all drank the same spiritual drink . . ." ⁵⁰ "Then we who are alive, who are left, shall be taken up together with them in the clouds to meet Christ, into

the air, and so shall we be always with the Lord.”⁵¹ Eriugena associated fluidly liminal cloud imagery and the sea with theophany.⁵²

Cosmological association of clouds with the heavens, and with the waters above and below the firmament of heaven, was common in early exegesis, backgrounding the metonymic relation of the Irish texts and physical environment. Such association is found also in the seventh-century *De Mirabilibus Sacrae Scripturae* by the Hiberno-Latin writer Augustinus Hibernicus, with its vision of the earth founded on waters (the earth including the lower air, and set in cycles of aerial waters). This drew on Genesis as explicated in earlier hexaemeral writings.⁵³ St. Basil of Caesarea in the fourth century gave the aerial waters of Genesis (in his view apparently close to the earth) an eschatological function, in that their eventual evaporation by the heat of the heavenly fires would signal the end of time (a kind of patristic “global warming”).⁵⁴ The *De Mirabilibus* and the related early Hiberno-Latin cosmology of the *De Ordine Creaturarum*⁵⁵ perhaps echoed this cosmic linking of the hexaemeral with the eschatological, associating depletion of the aerial waters with the biblical Flood. In Irish tradition, floods overwhelmed primeval legendary realms, perhaps thereby associating the waters and sea with access to paradisaal and otherworldly marvels.⁵⁶ An antediluvian “vapor cover” for earth (a kind of aerial Gulf Stream) also could have been envisioned as being literally and figuratively the atmosphere of Paradise or its afterlife.

Fluid exegetical association of sky/heavens and sea, suggestive of interpenetrative identities of body and environment, seems built into the very semantic range of *glas* as a color term.⁵⁷ In such melding of sky and sea, apparent in storms on the Irish Sea or Atlantic as well as across the islands, we can glimpse how early Irish monks must have perceived an inescapable cosmic analogue to both baptism and ascetic practice, one related directly to their own regimen in the form of well-attested water-related prayer rules and penitence. Such practice, mentioned in Irish hagiographical texts,⁵⁸ was not merely a literary motif but “thoroughly incorporated into religious life both as an ascetic act of piety and as an alternative form of penance.”⁵⁹ Immersion, involving either devotion or penance, or presumably a discipline combining the two, is described by a ninth-century Irish writer as discipline for overcoming earthly desires or as an additional labor of piety.⁶⁰ A seventh-century hymn to St. Columcille stated that *crochais, nípu i cinta, a chorp for tonna glassa* [it was not for his sins he crucified his body on the blue-grey-green [*glas*] waves].⁶¹ Stancliffe also referred to the role of tears, expressing the element of water in the human body, in “bloodless martyrdom” described in Latin works such as that by the fifth-century Spanish ascetic Bachiarius.⁶² All this does not mean that *glasmarte* was necessarily a watery rite or condition, but rather that the term likely evoked physical meanings that, through color imagery, and ascetic and penitential associations, linked the motif of human pallor to other motifs involving the heavens, clouds, aerial waters, and the sea. These in turn resonated with notions of redemption, Paradise, and cosmic rebirth and reintegration, thus relating spiritual practice in the human body directly to the cosmos in a strongly incarnational emphasis, as if to indicate a therapeutic integration with exterior cosmic forces engaged with Christ.⁶³

Associations of Christian ascetic practice with either the sea or aerial waters, though not always related to actual water rites, can be found in other early texts that were either known to the Irish or that came from a common milieu of Christian asceticism. Thus the Irish St. Columbanus wrote that Christians journeying through the world should “in the loftier regions of the heavenlies . . . seek the Fount of glory, the Fountain of life, the Fountain of living water, like intelligent and most wise fishes, that there we may drink the living water which springs up to eternal life.”⁶⁴ While “God is everywhere by virtue of his power and greatness, and deeper than the ocean, the first heaven is necessarily tempered by the waters above, or otherwise its nature would be set afire by the power of divinity and would be unendurable to mortal human beings.”⁶⁵ The comparison of human souls to fish dwelling in water is echoed in Christian tradition from the gospels to St. Athanasius in his *Life of St. Antony*⁶⁶ and the writings of St. Patrick.⁶⁷ Moreover, in the Macarian homilies, apparently influential for Cassian, we read:

As men in the trade go down naked into the depths of the sea, into the watery death, to find those pearls that will do for a royal crown, and purple dye, so those who live the monastic life go naked out of the world, and go down into the deep of the sea of evil and into the gulf of darkness, and from these depths they take and bring up precious stones suitable . . . for a new world.⁶⁸

In the Irish *Life of St. Brendan* and in the Latin *Vita Prima* of the saint, both the gates of hell and Paradise are found among the waves of the sea.⁶⁹ The sea could be described as a desert of suffering exile for early Irish monastics, and Adomnán refers to monks seeking a “desert in the ocean,” using the Latin *eremus*, which is clearly derived from accounts of the desert fathers.⁷⁰ However, as noted by Kay Muhr, waters more often than not had positive connotations in early Irish literature, akin to the often positive connotations of the desert in the *Life of St. Antony*.⁷¹ In Adomnán’s *Vita Columbae* of the seventh century, the sea in a sanctified state showed “storm and calm together in the same sea at the same time, but by God’s gift a marvellous line kept them apart,” as the liquid sea acts also as a type of solid land for burial in the perhaps eleventh-century Irish *Life of St. Brendan*.⁷² Ambiguous descriptions (and undoubtedly experiences) of the waters under the firmament as unstable and, potentially, a source of either good or of ill, are in a sense paralleled by perceptions of the lower air as the residence of cast-down rebel angels in early cosmology.⁷³ The lower air, identified with the earth, was, like the waters, known as unstable in the archipelago—yet also mirroring and promising cosmic connectivity. A path through it for the faithful presumably was cleared through Christ’s bodily Ascension, even as Christ would return through it again.⁷⁴ While early Irish scholars could sometimes write of the sea (inextricably connected to the unstable lower air) as a threatening desert as well, these natural zones of elements could also become a blue-grey-green (*glas* spanning both sky and sea) path to redemption.

Further background to cosmic associations of *glas* is provided by additional discussion of the color-winds in the *Saltair na Rann* (present also in the version

in the prefatory material to the *Senchas Már*), in which the winds are described as having (in Carey's translation) "an ordering accomplished by wisdom, to *glésa* without concealment" (lines 89–100). The seven "*glésa* [orderings, arrangements, harmonies] without concealment,"⁷⁵ apparently function in the poem as expressing wisdom (identified often in Christian patristic traditions with the *Logos*, Christ⁷⁶) ordering the form of winds in pairs, with one harmony on all. They are related implicitly to a dynamic sense of the seven heavens around earth, as part of the interactive relationship between nature and Christ in the poem and in patristic cosmology. The difficult term *glésa* can be readily contextualized in the seventh-century cosmology of St. Maximus the Confessor, partly translated and adapted by Eriugena.⁷⁷ There, the purposes or *logoi* of created beings were personal manifestations of a personal God, the *Logos*, and were not merely objectified abstractions. As Maximus put it: "The one *Logos* is many *logoi*, and the many *logoi* are one."⁷⁸ *Ratio*, one Latin translation of *logos*, was referred to in a preface to the *Senchas Már* following the account of the winds and *glésa*. There *ratio* is related to the etymology of the root *sen* of *senchas*, which is also identified with *dliged*, a term often glossed in Old Irish as *ratio* or law.⁷⁹ From such lore of law, we are told, come the names of fruit and the colors, naming and colors being related to the search for the wisdom of all things.⁸⁰ The range of definitions of *logos* overlaps those of both *ratio* and *glés*.

Maximus' configuring of Dionysian apophaticism into an orthodox Christian cosmology arguably involved a role for the *logoi* similar to that of the divine willings described in the Dionysian corpus (also translated by Eriugena and an influence on both his and Maximus' sense of divine energies) and the *glésa* governing the wind colors.⁸¹ Interestingly, Dionysian analogues have been detected in the *Altus Prosator*, probably one of the earliest extant Irish poems, attributed to St. Columba,⁸² with a distinctive account of the movement of water around the world through clouds, sea, winds, and marsh (Adomnán noted Columba's own interest in tidal movements).⁸³ Among its apparent sources, the poem also shows influence from Cassian's writings, reflective of another purported interest of Columba's. The Dionysian corpus in fact contains a potential analogue in linked themes if not precise terminology to the *Saltair na Rann*'s cosmology: The fifteenth chapter of the *Celestial Hierarchy* speaks of winds and clouds as symbolic of angelic beings, in a discussion that also explicates the meaning of colors of biblical stones.⁸⁴ Such commonality of outlook echoes in the Irish monk Dungal's energetic ninth-century defense of images or "color theology" by comparison to the semi-iconoclastic tone of the Carolingian *Libri Carolini* or *Opus Caroli regis* in the West.⁸⁵

The process of Augustinus Hibernicus' adaptation of ideas from Augustine of Hippo provides another model for contextualizing the concept of *glasmarte* in this larger Christian tradition. Hibernicus' *De Mirabilibus* seeks to explain the "naturalness" of biblical miracles as a process by which God brings out the hidden nature of one thing as manifested by another,⁸⁶ using the Latin term *ratio* in a way that would seem to parallel the use of the Irish *glés* in the *Saltair* passage on the winds. A higher *ratio* is "that [which] is the unusual governing which is discerned in miraculous things" and a lower *ratio* is "understood as the daily governing of things," both integrated in God's natural government of creation.⁸⁷ In fact, as Carey has noted, despite obvious surface resemblances in

their cosmological exegesis, the Irish Augustine eschews the specific terminology and conceptualization used by his earlier namesake Augustine of Hippo.⁸⁸ The latter had described his two tiers of cosmic archetypes as eternal reasons in the Word of God and causal reasons implanted by God in the Creation, using an array of terms⁸⁹ in his influential work *De Genesi ad litteram*.⁹⁰ Hibernicus' seemingly more integrated delineation of higher and lower *ratio* is more engaged in the world, less conceptually abstract, as he seeks actively to demonstrate the naturalness of miracles. His emphasis is on dynamic patterns on an earth naturally engaged with the government of Christ.⁹¹ Hibernicus' key term *ratio* is a synonym for *logos* as used by Evagrius and Maximus, and Eriugena wrote that "the Word [the Greek *Logos*] Itself and the multiple and most primal reason [*Ratio*] of the whole created universe are one and the same,"⁹² even as he could describe primordial causes or theophanies in creation as either created or uncreated, depending on the viewer-participant's perspective. Eriugena placed these dynamic causes ambiguously in creation, their effects as theophanies in physical nature yet their reality equivalent to *energeia* or uncreated activity of God, offering again a possible analogue to cosmological aspects of *glasmartre*.⁹³ Eriugena, using *ratio* in a way that echoes both its use by the Irish Augustine and the role of *glés* in the *Saltair na Rann* wind texts, writes that the primordial causes

participate in God immediately, and are the principles [*principia*] of all things . . . constituted in and after the One Universal Principle; and the essences that follow after them subsist by participation in them . . . among the numbers when they are constituted under one principle [*ratione*], the proportions are similar, so between all the natural orders from the highest to the lowest the participations by which they are related are similar . . . in the same way the Wisdom that is the Creator of all things has constituted between the participations of the natural orders marvellous and ineffable harmonies . . .⁹⁴

According to Eriugena's scheme, the narrative of creation in Genesis suggests that the primordial causes are in effect above the firmament, which he relates to the basic four elements, indicating that bodies are brought forth as earthly beings from the primordial causes and then return to them, through the medium of the elements.⁹⁵ Likewise, the wind-color texts seem to relate the seven *glésa* to the seven heavens, in a horizontally dynamic rather than vertically abstract hierarchy of interactive levels around earth. This was a significantly different emphasis from Augustine's view of the firmament separating heaven and earth as representing scripture, and more akin to St. Columbanus' comparison of the depths of the sea to the mystery of the Trinity.⁹⁶ Indeed, while Augustine wrote of human pride as a huge hollow mountain blocking spiritual harbor and rest, swallowing up the sea traveler desperate for port,⁹⁷ the image of the hollow mountain embodied Paradise in the fourth-century exegesis of St. Ephrem the Syrian. In Ephrem's model (as in the Hiberno-Latin *De Ordine*), Paradise was above earth, and (as in all-embracing Otherworld motifs of Celtic narratives) encompassing the earth in a hollow otherworldly mountain, again evocative of the reimagined native Otherworld trope of early Irish Sea narratives. St. Gregory of Nyssa, a source for Eriugena, held similar views. To Gregory and Ephrem, Paradise was a place of which only the foothills

had been touched by the Flood, whose inhabitants “dance on the sea’s surface.”⁹⁸ Within this perspective we may also place the Irish tradition of St. Brendan building his boat on a mountain before setting out to sea to find the land of promise (a kind of homage-in-reverse to Noah’s ark landing on top of a mountain).⁹⁹

At the end we return to the cosmic connections of water, winds, and bodily penance in tears and fasting in an early Irish monastic context, in which Paradise dwells amid the aerial waters, as in the writings of St. Ephrem, the *De Ordine*, and in a more diffuse sense in early Irish otherworldly narratives such as *Immram Brain*, all relatable through the color term *glas* and its associations. The chromatic aspect of the word *glasmartre* as ascetic *praxis* thus can be read incarnationally in a sense typing Christ: a *logos* of the *Logos*, participating in the Incarnation that St. Gregory the Sinaite (writing later in the Greek tradition) described as the “thickening” of the Word into image.¹⁰⁰ So the Irish St. Columbanus exhorted the faithful to “let Christ paint his own image in us,” echoing St. Paul’s words to his readers that they themselves were a letter written in his own heart (I Cor. 3.2).¹⁰¹ In early Irish, the seventh-century *Aipgitir Chrabaid* (“The Alphabet of Devotion”) perhaps offers the strongest analogue to the cosmic links of the term *glasmartre* as involving both penance and ascetic desire: “The four redemptions of the soul: fear and repentance, love and hope. Two of them protect it on earth, the other two waft it to Heaven.”¹⁰²

Tears of penance and paleness of face engage in the early Irish context with cosmic elements expressed by *glas* in chromatic textual associations with sea and sky and vegetation, while the context of the *Cambrai Homily* as a whole also suggests an externalized context for martyrdom in emphasizing the need to share the suffering of others. This is a Christian landscape focused bodily but in a decentralized way on the archipelago’s “deserts” of sea, sky, and organic growth. Meanings of *glas* as “shining” and “the color of sky in water” raise in this context final parallels between the uncreated noetic light (or theophany of divine energies) as it developed in Byzantine ascetic practice from the Cappadocian era onward, and the light sometimes associated with otherworldly beings in Irish narratives. A poem attributed to Columcille speaks of looking back from exile using the term *glas*: *Fil slúil nglas fégbas Éirinn dar a hais* . . . [“There is a blue-grey-green eye that looks back at Ireland”].¹⁰³ *Glas* here, read by Mikhailova as shining, could mean sad or bright or angry; she suggests the last interpretation.¹⁰⁴ Yet in terms of *glasmartre* there is another meaning encompassing them all, in relation to *glas* as describing spiritual practice: sadness in penance, joy at the promise of salvation, anger at sin, all amid what could be called a cosmic asceticism, an empathy of joyful sorrow. Staniloae likened such noetic experience to a sparkle in all creation that is in a sense intuitive yet “sparkles as an overwhelming reason, as an objective *logos* understood by us, yet beyond our understanding.”¹⁰⁵ The eye as the eye of the soul, or *nous*, in this early Christian sense is integrated with the cosmic otherness that it beholds. In the Eastern Mediterranean practice of hesychasm we can glimpse in this sense a last analogue to the Irish concept of *glasmartre*, in the involvement of the physical body—through posture, breathing, fasting from objects of sensual passion, and speaking the iconographic name of God in rhythm with the body—with directing the *nous* or eye of the mind to the heart, and to a oneness with the uncreated

light of the divine energies. Adapting Deleuze and Guattari, such a fluid bodily “desiring assemblage,” interpenetrating with cosmically connective theophany-fantasy, as a cultural norm potentially produces a kind of ecological wisdom spanning spiritual, social, and environmental concerns.

Returning to Columba’s “*glas* eye,” we can consider St. Ephrem the Syrian’s fourth-century writings on the need for a luminous heart to renew a luminous eye, leading beyond prayer to cosmic wonder (the Syriac word translated luminous, *shafyut*, important to Ephrem’s writings, meaning also “limpid, lucid, clear, pure, transparent, serene or sincere”¹⁰⁶: the color of sky in water, perhaps). To Ephrem, Eve and Mary are the two eyes of the world; Mary’s eye was kept luminous and “she is the land which receives the source of light: through her it has illumined the whole world with its inhabitants, which had grown dark through Eve.”¹⁰⁷ Ephrem’s analogy suggests a typology in Irish Christian writings about the goddess of the land and Sovereignty in the Otherworld, exemplifying the contextual relations of human body, cosmos, and redemption in much early medieval Christian *praxis* that helped shape Irish landscape narratives. Blue-grey-green asceticism was, in this context, a discipline of cosmic synergy to see through that luminous eye. With its earthly range of color, *glasmarte* is an ecocentric motif set in a larger cultural project of particular political contexts¹⁰⁸: crafting textual iconographic landscape for realms of early Christian Ireland as the earth that is (in Ephrem’s terms) also Mary and the mystery of the human heart.¹⁰⁹

Unlike a Platonic emphasis on reaching archetypes of reality, the colors of the winds and colors of martyrdom, overlapping in *glas* with its environmental associations, evoke a mysterious reality of immanent divine energy infusing the world and entwining with our experience, a reality of relationality always ungraspable in essence. In this they partake of the Otherworld landscape and Eriugena’s fourfold Nature. The fluidity of body, earth, and spiritual realms in this context echoes the theology of John Cassian’s mentor, John Chrysostom, in comments on St. Paul’s statement that “This hope [of faith] we have as an anchor of the soul” (Heb. 5:19):

For through hope we are already in heaven . . . And you see how very suitable an image he [Paul] has discovered: for he did not say “foundation,” but “anchor.” For that which is in the tossing sea, and seems not to be very firmly fixed, stands on the water as upon land, and is shaken and yet is not shaken.¹¹⁰

Contrast this with the emphasis in Augustine of Hippo’s statement: “As yet we bear the mortality of the flesh, and take future immortality upon trust; and on the sea we are tossed about by the waves, but we have the anchor of hope already fixed upon the land.”¹¹¹ Chrysostom speaks of being *already* in heaven through hope, standing on the water as upon land, and not connected to a distinct land of salvation via an anchor: Standing on the sea as on land, shaken and yet not shaken, not being linked to another land beyond the earthly sea as in Augustine’s text—in short, participating in an environmental Otherworld, as in accounts from early Irish annals of aerial ships that float through the air as if at sea.¹¹²



Bernas Bó Cuailnge in County Louth, traditionally associated with the first-century BC route of the *Táin Bó Cúailnge*, and now part of a twenty-first-century network of tourist and hiking/biking routes known as The Táin Trail. Nearby is the Cronn River, which reputedly rose to protect Cú Chulainn during the cattle raid. (Author's photo; see endnote)

CHAPTER 5

A COSMIC IMAGINARIUM

Metonymy is (no pun intended) all over the place.

—Eelco Runia, “Presence”

The environmental sense of text as image evoked by the color-term *glas* requires further examining of the Otherworld trope in relation to early medieval visual theory. The “problem” of landscape in *Táin Bó Cúailnge* and its context in the Ulster cycle provides a place to start. The Celticist Francesco Benozzo notes that *Táin Bó Cúailnge* offers “mere allusions to landscapes, sometimes so vague that they seem to belong to a stylised convention.”¹ But the *Táin*’s allusive landscape also has been highlighted by an able translator, Thomas Kinsella (among many others), for showcasing topography, “a continuing pre-occupation of early and medieval Irish literature.”² While the *Táin* in successive versions does not feature modern-style landscape, it is grounded and focused on places, spaces, and terrain on Ireland, mythically contextualized around the time of Christ. To read the *Táin* as a literary landscape that in a modern sense is “not there” but nonetheless integrates tradition with physical topography is necessarily to consider its context in the Ulster Cycle and related stories in the Mythological Cycle, all featuring landscape in which otherworldly and human realms interweave with natural topography. The role of such landscape echoes textually Ernst Gombrich’s view of the function of colors in visual art as Benozzo restates it, metonymic in at once being part of reality and representing it,³ but with words in topography taking the place of colors in images. The landscape of the *Táin* as textual image related to environment subverts Augustine’s paralleling and hierarchizing of reading over viewing, so influential in the West.⁴ As fantasy history that is also geography,⁵ the narratives also evoke Eelco Runia’s reassessment of historical narratology as “metonymics”: “The presence of the past . . . does not reside primarily in the intended story or the manifest metaphorical content,” but as a “stowaway” presence “stored in metonymy,” a type of textual place that is relationship.⁶ It is that metonymic yet oddly central presence of landscape in the *Táin* and related texts that will be examined in this chapter, to understand how the stylized allusiveness of early

Irish Sea literary landscape can be “read” using early medieval Christian visual art and perception theory.

In this we must remember that the landscape of the Ulster Cycle was an accommodation—neither a conquest nor even a direct appropriation—of Ireland’s traditional cultural landscape, formed in retrospect by emerging literate Christian dynasties and monastic allies. It is both an accommodation and a kind of layered sedimentation of cultural change and literate textualization, akin to the Irish place-name lore of the *dindshenchas* or the account of successive invasions in the *Lebor Gabála Éirenn*. Not coincidentally, both *dindshenchas* and a version of the *Lebor Gabála* are included in the Book of Leinster manuscript (ca. 1150) that includes the Second Recension of the *Táin*. The *Táin* itself is not so much a monumentalization as an identification through memory of topography, a metonymy setting up two interacting levels of signification amid a triadic dynamic of presence, land, and text. In the *Táin* and related tales we see an elaborated project of landscape-text, interweaving vignettes of place with historical narrative of landscape in an Otherworld frame, an environmental *chronotope* (to borrow Mikhail Bakhtin’s term for literary world) of time-space here termed a “cosmic imaginarium,” relating a legendarium to geographic experience in embodying performatively visual theory of that age.

Topography and pseudo-history ground the spiritual realm, with otherworldly sites and incidents generally mappable on the actual land while the dating of the text is in flux.⁷ As T.M. Charles-Edwards put it well of one famous *síd* site, “The ridge of Tara may have consisted then, as it does today, of grass, but it was more than merely a matter of legend.”⁸ This metonymic synthesis embodies what Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari described as the maintained tension in the creative energy of desire between the process of producing and the product, which prevents the latter from becoming a static object.⁹ The synthesis or metonym really is the balance of that tension, which is a type of composition on an immanent plane, as geophilosopher Philip Goodchild notes in explicating Deleuze and Guattari. Such metonymic art, in Goodchild’s terms, can “make us ‘believe’ in the body to restore a direct self-awareness to the body” as ecological and relational process, while it “rediscovers the infinite through the finite object that it fashions, restoring the infinite as a principle of composition.”¹⁰

The apparent contradictory readings of landscape in the *Táin* by Benozzo and Kinsella are understandable when considering it within a framework of “literature as heuristic,” which is defined by literary scholar Gary Saul Morson as story embodying a set of problem-solving techniques, revolving around “a shrewd guess based on experience,” and incorporating as “a kind of suspense . . . the *resistance* that reality offers to the artist’s methods.”¹¹ Such an experientially heuristic reading of the Otherworld in the Ulster Cycle relates topographic-based textuality to a sense of lived body as landscape. The *Táin* does not offer a homogeneous literary algorithm or purportedly objective formula of landscape. It invokes a sense of nature as mystery book in the mold of iconic manuscripts such as the Book of Kells, rather than a coded text to be consumed and possessed conceptually in reconstituted naturalistic form.¹² Otherworld narratives of the Ulster

Cycle as a whole, including the *Táin*, arguably engage heuristically through landscape the problem of a Christianized society (as a monastic literary culture) reflecting on an ancestral pagan past through the land. This “problem” involves integrating faith with the natural world while resisting domination by rising new political and economic secular orders—whether they be centralizing Irish dynasties, Scandinavian, or Anglo-Saxon or Anglo-Norman, or even the centralized ecclesiasticism of the high-medieval European church. How does one keep one’s physical relation to one’s spirituality while not losing the latter to some form of secular domination? This heuristic in the deep structure of the Ulster Cycle’s overlay landscape motif parallels development of Christian iconography in the same period, which addressed aspects of the same problems in different contexts, as well as Cassian-style asceticism.¹³ In Morson’s terms, the “resistance that reality offers” in this landscape heuristic is the experience of difference in a physical setting, of place as a happening rather than a passive object, the imitation of the Incarnation in a sense in the believer’s physical heart.

Throughout the *Táin*’s evolution as a narrative, from its probable development in current form in the ninth century, the “real” topography of Louth and neighboring areas seems to have remained central to the core of the main “cattle raid” story, with the bulls perhaps of earlier mythical origin and thus the natural world of Ireland still grounding the epic.¹⁴ Even one way in which the *Táin* is supposedly rediscovered involves topography, as the narrative is brought forth from a grave that in effect disgorges the tale. More than one version of the recovery is presented, including one associating the story with local Christian saints descended from the pagan Fergus.¹⁵ Such intertwining or intertexture is in keeping with the pattern of variation seen in the style of many early Irish texts.¹⁶ This pattern can be seen as reflecting a quasi-empirical desire to gather varied evidence and perspectives to find the truth. Yet it contributes textually to an iconographic “inverse perspective,” in which a multiplex image is exteriorized in effect between art and the reader. The narrative style through variations deflects interiorization of the reader in the image, as does the content in terms of the stylized dual nature of landscape—otherworldly and this-worldly, implicitly Christian and explicitly pagan—all related to actual topography. Theories of perception expressed in such effects were taken seriously as life practices in that era, Peter Brown notes: “*perspectiva* is not merely a curious context for isolated literary passages but instead a subject area that writers internalized as part of their imaginings.”¹⁷ However, the interiority noted by Brown is related in the Ulster Cycle to an exteriority of familiar physical topography, as well as to its background in the Christian “energy” cosmology already discussed. Its multidimensional landscape effect undoubtedly was figured ultimately in relation to God. The paradoxical spiritual ethic of such “dialogical materialism” is articulated by Bakhtin from later Russian iconographic tradition: “In Christ we find a synthesis of unique depth . . . disclosing and affirming the other’s axiological distinctiveness in all its fullness . . . [w]hat I must be for the other, God is for me.”¹⁸

What can be called a conscious literary orality of structure also informs the multiple versions of the *Táin*, adding to the fluid sense of its landscape

narrative as not conceptually controllable by the reader.¹⁹ The crafted layering is in part linguistic, as Celticist Hildegard L.C. Tristram has noted, in describing how the macaronic main vernacular texts incorporate Latin, and how their content mixes Classical Mediterranean, Christian, and native Irish learning, compiled in extended literary form in her view as late as the eleventh century under the influence of Latin models.²⁰ Matching the landscape's shifts between Otherworld and this-world frames are, throughout its narratives, textual shifts between and within versions. The narrative survives earliest in a variegated First Recension (ca. 1100, in *Lebor na hUidre*,²¹ the Book of the Dun Cow). The classic example of the patchwork of that version is how Finnabair, daughter of Medb and Aillil, is killed in one scene only to appear again in a following one. And while some satellite stories including *Aislinge Óengusso*—and through it *Tochmarc Étaíne* and *Togail Bruidne Dá Derga*—conjoin to the main cycle with fantasy-historical elements, others such as *Táin Bó Fraích* (“The Cattle Raid of Fróech”) spotlight variant versions of characters from the central *Táin*.²² Like the American poet Wallace Stevens’ famous experimental twentieth-century poem “Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird,” the variety of perspectives implied in the textuality of the Ulster Cycle (including always that of the land itself) can be dizzying, and not conducive to any objective image.²³ In addition, there was a highlighted cultural aspect to the grounded historicity of landscape in these texts. In the related Ulster tale *Serglige Con Culainn & Oenét Emire* (“The Wasting Sickness of Cú Chulainn and the Only Jealousy of Emer”) ²⁴ the hero of the *Táin* receives a report of the realm of the *side* from his charioteer similar to that given to Étaín (quoted in chapter two), telling of art melding with nature in a land filled with “descendants of sinless Adam” (*síl nÁdaim cen imarbos*).²⁵

In the sixth-century Sinai icon of Christ Pantokrator (figure 5.1), we see a contemporary and parallel visual aesthetic of exteriorized dialogic that forms itself outside the artifact, engaging outwardly the perceptual field of the viewer, rather than drawing the viewer into the artwork. The light around Christ’s head both highlights and destabilizes the image, which melds into a sense of a pattern in which the image is both highlighted and invested. The hand of Christ giving the blessing reaches out of the frame in inverse perspective, while the positioning of the gospel book adds to the “pop-up” effect of the lit-up background. The figure of Christ does not diminish proportionately “inside” the frame, but looms disproportionately larger than the “closer” hands. The effect functions thematically as well: The gospel book is a reminder of the integration of word and image in iconography and doctrine, connecting *logoi* and *Logos* in creation beyond the frame. The engaging hand in blessing likewise embodies the interaction of spoken word and physical nature, in a material artifact that is yet an engaged spiritual energy in effect—embodying the activity of Christ in relation to the venerator-viewer, who bodily kisses and touches as well as beholds it. The iconic face demonstrates not modern naturalism, but inverse perspective in theme. It exhibits a multilayered plane of expression that tends to repel interiorization. The right side of the Savior’s face from the venerator’s perspective is that of judgment, the left of mercy. The nature of Christ in the rhetorical and

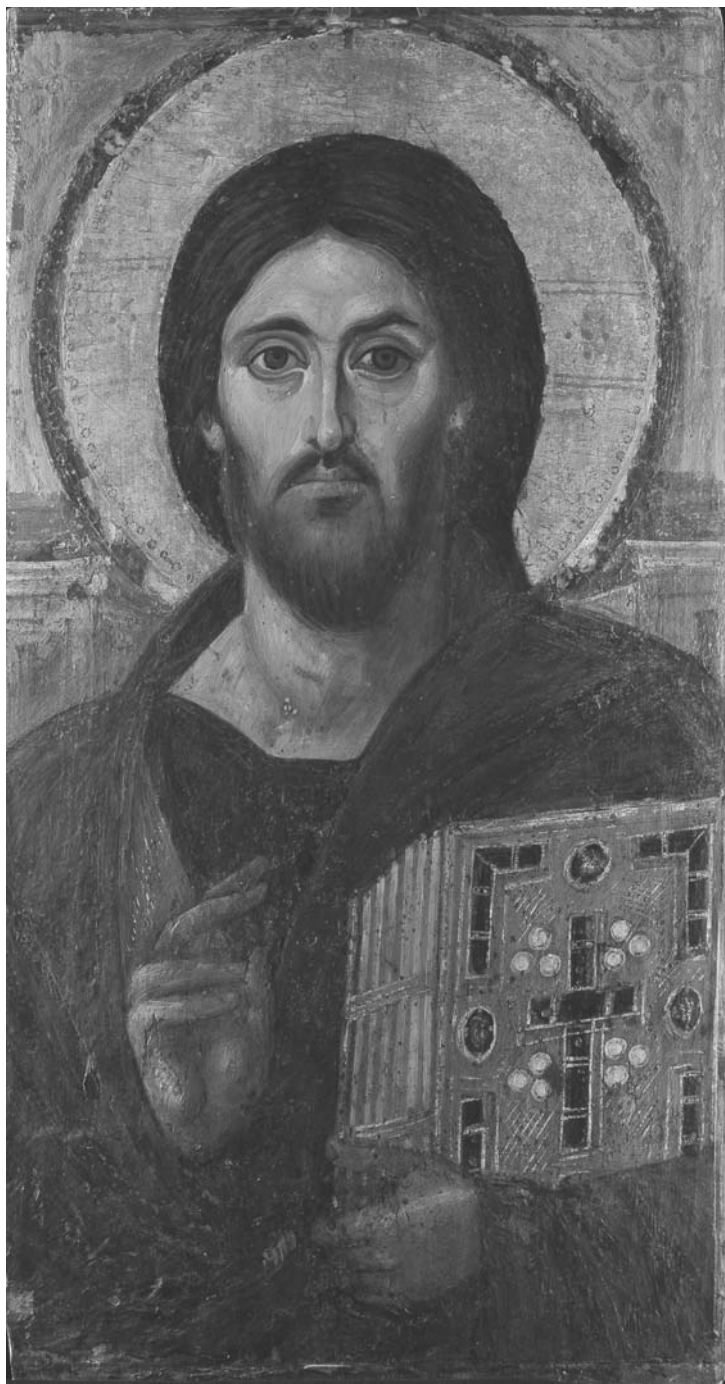


Figure 5.1 Christ Pantokrator icon, sixth century CE, St. Catherine's Monastery, Sinai Desert. (Image courtesy of St. Catherine's.)

experiential framework of the icon is a metonymic mystery, not to be penetrated but engaged. The art again “happens” environmentally in relationship, rather than interiorly in the artifact and gaze of the beholder.

The buildings and scenery in the background evoke the Holy Land, probably Jerusalem, perhaps the Sinai monastery at the mountain of Mosaic theophany. Holy Land topography was itself multilayered. During the medieval centuries in which this icon was first venerated, that physical region became a landscape “lost” from a Byzantine perspective. Yet, in another sense the area was still the most “real” of landscapes. To that lost empire, which had built the desert fortifications guarding the icon’s home, now isolated under Islamic rule, an ever-dwindling realm was supplemented by development of a commonwealth of Christian states in Balkan and Slavic lands. This involved creation of a common cultural landscape akin to that developed among fragmented polities around the early medieval Irish Sea—by iconography evoking a lost spiritual heartland, as with reflection in the Atlantic archipelago on pre-Christian ancestral landscape, a mythical lost *Romanitas* associated with the origins of indigenous churches in the region, and a view of a threatened native Christianity amid pressures of invasion.

The total effect, “rather than inviting the viewer unmediated into the composition, draws attention instead to mediating motifs that stimulate recognition, reflection, and recapitulation,” explains art historian Annemarie Weyl Carr, in discussing late Byzantine iconography that drew on earlier aesthetic elements.²⁶ She posits also an empathy in hesychasm for such artistic practice, hesychasm also having grown from earlier desert asceticism that helped to shape Irish monasticism.²⁷ Forms in later Byzantine imagery were “engulfed in as well as silhouetted against” the light of background gold and highlights, and Carr observes that this stylistic light

shatters at the luminous crests of the volumes, breaking and splintering across the curves in a delicate glitter of lines. Persuasive but particulate, the forms are united not only by spatial coherence but by a carefully modulated play of pattern across the surface. In a manner reminiscent of Cubism, where a surface disintegrated by facets of persuasive volume is reintegrated by carefully modulated visual rhyme, the icons unite a play of deep luminism with a codified body of refined surface patterns that absorb the eye and fracture the image.²⁸

The influence of desert ascetic imagery in early Byzantine illuminated manuscripts on later iconography’s expanded sense of space, Carr adds, “yielded a novel kind of icon exemplified by the Dormition of Saint Ephrem, one that is not so much of a holy person—the holy man here lies dead—than it is of the living, holy space that defined him.”²⁹ It is thus no coincidence, she argues, that El Greco, one of Europe’s earliest and most powerful landscape painters, as seen in his work depicting Mount Sinai, was trained in iconography.

The medievalist Mary Carruthers has noted how reading was a visual process in the early Middle Ages, and thus environmental in a sense.³⁰ There is not so much the perceptual sense of being isolated in a book-lined study in early medieval monastic writings explored here. Theories and patterns of

both perception and reading are related to personal modes of intersubjectivity. Indeed, as figure 5.2 suggests, perceptual construction of Otherworld landscape in Irish narrative is akin to the inverse perspective of the Sinai Christ icon just discussed. The reflective or apophatic screen of the surface of the landscape-narrative is formed not through fusion of stylized spiritualized image and wood panel or mosaic, but from a stylized image of landscape that fused Otherworld and Insular physical topography in metonymy. The textual effect heuristically reflects the story back to physical middle-place between reader and written words.

The landscape field of perception is shaped somewhere outside the reader's own interior conceptualization, and is in a sense non-objectifiable, with implications for the culture's construction of nature.³¹ This iconographic process is based ultimately in early monastic practice in the desert. The schematically figured process of iconographic reading of literary landscape also correlates in part (not coincidentally) with Late Classical/early medieval and Byzantine "extra-mission" theories of vision, in which sight in effect would pull out an image to the viewer, but did not necessarily correlate with notions of interiorization of memory.³² For the iconodule par excellence, St. John of Damascus, extramission was part of an emphasis on perception as basing cognition—the physical and intellectual as determining understanding together.³³ And Eriugena speaks of his senses extending far beyond the framework of the body, beholding, for example, the stars "situated far from that place where the mass of my little body roams...I behold them in the rays of my eyes which dart out thither without a moment's delay, and in which are formed the phantasies of the...stars."³⁴ Paradoxically, intromission (a contrary perceptual theory in which the visual comes from the object of sight to the eyes³⁵) by giving primacy to the object ensures the objectifying of it by and as the subject, an effect that is articulated today in the "mirror theory" of Lacanian psychoanalytic theory and the simulacrum effect described by Jean Baudrillard. Yet iconographic haptic visual

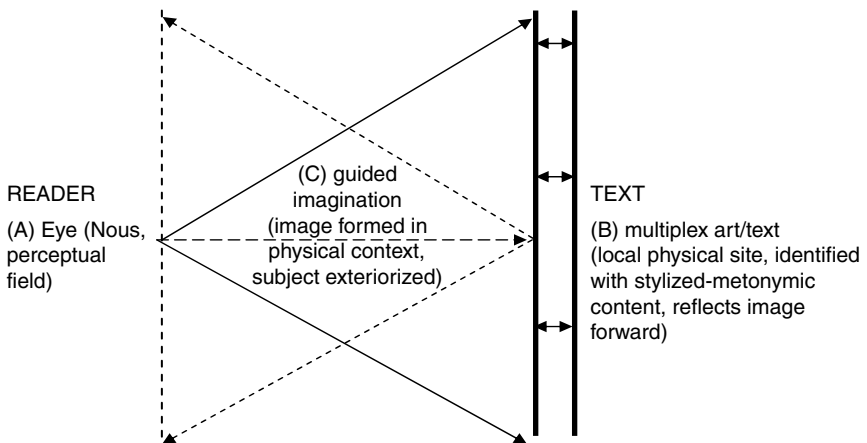


Figure 5.2 Iconographic imagination.

experience is neither entirely extramissive nor intromissive in theory, a binary of Platonic and Aristotelian origins. Assigning extramissive tendencies in early Christian iconographic theory to Neoplatonism neglects the personal relational desire and empathy in the very nature of things found in apophatic theology.³⁶ Even Augustine's extramissively oriented theory of physical vision in synergy between subject and object, with its segregation from spiritual sight, doesn't quite reach the peculiar integration-with-separation of the iconographic, in which fantasy-theophanies are formed exteriorly in the rays of the eyes, following Eriugena's comment.³⁷

The connection between perception and environment in figure 5.2 is more one of performative practice than objectification, reminiscent of the religious scholar Catherine Bell's work on ritual and Roy Rappaport's ecological anthropology, discussed earlier, and more to the point here medieval asceticism. The art historian Jás Elsner describes an iconographic way of seeing in Classical contexts as "ritual-centered visibility" related to processions and pilgrimages. It highlights the place of perception and of the self in the physical environment. Elsner writes of this visibility as

divesting the spectator of all the social and discursive elements that distinguish his or her subjectivity from that of the god into whose space the viewer will come. In the reciprocal gaze of divine confrontation, there is a form of visibility in which the image does not just *look back* at the viewer, but in which the viewer has specifically made the journey *in order that* the image should look back. . . . The word for it in Greek is *theoria*, which from Plato to the Church Fathers means "contemplation," "meditation," "vision." The difference from the visibility of naturalism is fundamental. For in mimesis, the viewer stands apart from the world of the image, which operates illusionistically in its own space. . . . looking at it is like looking through a glass screen into someone else's life. . . . [T]he more the possibility for contact is offered. . . . the more the [mimetic] image's illusionism tempts us into believing that it is real, the closer we come to the tragedy of Narcissus. . . .³⁸

Archaeologist Hilary Richardson, in a survey of early Irish visual art and society that relates that tradition to Elsner's concept of ritual-centered visibility, notes: "A phrase often repeated by early Irish writers is 'to see with the eyes of the heart' or 'the eyes of the mind' . . . Early Christian art in Ireland. . . was liturgical rather than religious; an art constructed to aid contemplation and prayer."³⁹ The tradition of such ritual-centered visibility in early Irish Christianity again was connected to experientially performative rhetoric of asceticism. The latter involved both a network of community and the physical practice of ascetic prayer rules.⁴⁰ To adapt an art-history phrase, such craft in narrative shapes the "text-icon in space," a physically contextualized image. Art historian Robert Nelson notes, developing ideas of the "beholder's share" from Ernst Gombrich, that while Rembrandt's famous *De Staalmeesters* involves a sense of the pictorial window as a two-way mirror (with the viewer on the side looking in through a vacuous neutral zone), Christ in iconography of Byzantine churches "leans through that 'window' with insouciant ease."⁴¹ The culturally contextualized

viewer of the icon thus was “engaged with images and with communities viewed and viewing,” in essence an exteriorized landscape.

The physical description of the boundary-crossing warp spasms of Cú Chulainn in the *Táin*, the description of the strange beauty of Étaín the fly in *Tochmarc Étaíne*, and the description of Étaín’s beauty in *Tógail Bruidne Dá Derga* in relation to colors and forms of the physical environment and human artisan-ship connected with it, all arguably express textual aspects of the visual aesthetic just described.⁴² The lengthy description of Étaín as a maiden includes phrases such as

Taitned fria in grían co bba forderg dona feraib tuídhleach ind óir frisín ngréin asin títiu uain[i]di. Dá trilis n-órbuidi fora cind. Fige ceithri ndúal ceachtar ndé, 7 mell for rind cach dúail. Ba cosmail leó dath ind fhoiltsin fri barr n-ailestair hi samrad nó fri dergór iar ndénam a datha.⁴³

The sun kept shining upon her, so that the glistening of the gold against the sun from the green silk was visible to men. On her head were two golden-yellow tresses, in each of which was a plait of four locks, with a bead at the point of each lock. The hue of that hair seemed to them like the flower of the iris in summer or like burned red gold.⁴⁴

Likewise Cú Chulainn’s warp spasm is described in ways that parallel the perceptual effects of iconographic style discussed earlier, as indicated by this excerpt from the First Recension of the *Táin*:

Is and so cétríastartha im Choin Culaind co nderna úathbásach n-ílrechtach n-ingantach n-anaichnid de. Crithnaigset a charíni imbi imar crand re sruth nó imar bocshimin fri sruth cach mball 7 cach n-alt 7 cach n-ind 7 cach n-áge de ó mul-luch co talmain. Ro láe sáebglés díberge dá churp i mmedón a chrocind. Tánatár a t[h]raigthe 7 a luirgne 7 a glúne co mbátár dá éis. Tánatár a shála 7 a orcní 7 a escata co mbátár ríam remi. Tánatár tulfhéthi a orcán co mbátár for tul a lurgan combá métithir muldor[n]d míled cech mecon dermár díbide. Srengtha tollfhéthe a mul-laich co mbátár for cóich a muineóil combá métithir cend meic mís cach mulchnoc dímór dírim díreca dímesraigthe díbide. And sin dorigní cúach cera dá gnúis 7 dá agid fair. Imslo[i]c indara súil dó ina chend; iss ed mod dánas tairsed fiadchorr [a] tagraim do lár a grúade a hia[r]thor a c[h]locaind. Seseing a sétig co mboi fora grúad sec[h]tair. Ríastartha a bél co úrtrachta. Srengais in n-ól don fhidba chnána comtar écnaig a ginchróes. Tánatár a scoim 7 a t[h]romma co mbátár ar etelaig ina bél 7 ina brágit. Benais béim n-ulgaib leóman don charput úachtarach fora fhorcli comba métithir molt-chracand cech slamsrúam thened doniged ina bél asa brágit. Roclos blocbéimnech a chride ré chliab imar glimnaig n-árchon hi fotha nó mar leómain ic techta fó mathgamnaib. Atchessa na coinnli bodba 7 na cithnélla neme 7 na haible tened trichemrúaid i nnéllaib 7 i n-áeraib úasa chind re fiuchud na ferge fírgarge hitrácht úaso. Ra chasnig a fholt imma c[h]end imar craíbred ndergsciach i mbernaid at[h]álda. Ce ro crateá rígaball fó ríghthorad immi iss ed mod dá rísad ubull díb dochum talman taris acht ro sesed ubull for cach óenfhinna and re frith-chassad na ferge atracht dá fhult úaso. Atract in lúan láith asa étun comba sithethir remithir airmem n-óclaich corbo chomfota frisín sróin coro dechrastár co imbirt na sciath, oc brogad ind arad, oc taibleth na slóg. Ardithir immorro remithir tal-cithir tresithir sithidir seólc[h]rand prímlui[n]gi móri in buinne díriuch dondfhala

atracht a fírchléthe a chendmullaig hi certairdi, co nderna dubcháiaich ndrúidechta de amal cháiaig do rígrudin in tan tic rí día tincur hi fescur lathe gemreta.⁴⁵

Then a great distortion came upon Cú Chulainn so that he became horrible, many-shaped, strange and unrecognizable. All the flesh of his body quivered like a tree in a current or like a bulrush in a stream, every limb and every joint, every end and every member of him from head to foot. He performed a wild feat of contortion with his body inside his skin. His feet and his shins and his knees came to the back; his heels and his calves and his hams came to the front. The sinews of his calves came on to the front of his shins, and each huge round knot of them was as big as a warrior's fist. The sinews of his head were stretched to the nape of his neck and every huge immeasurable, vast, incalculable round ball of them was as big as the head of a month-old child. Then his face became a red hollow (?). He sucked one of his eyes into his head so deep that a wild crane could hardly have reached it to pluck it out from the back of his skull on to his cheek. The other eye sprang out on to his cheek. His mouth was twisted back fearsomely. He drew back his cheek from his jawbone until his inward parts were visible. His lungs and his liver fluttered in his mouth and his throat. His upper palate clashed against the lower in a mighty pincer-like movement (?) and every stream of fiery flakes which came into his mouth from his throat was as wide as a ram's skin. The loud beating of his heart against his ribs was heard like the baying of a bloodhound... or like a lion attacking bears. The torches of the war-goddess, virulent rain-clouds and sparks of blazing fire, were seen in the air over his head with the seething of fierce rage that rose in him. His hair curled about his head like branches of red hawthorn used to re-fence a gap in a hedge. If a noble apple-tree weighed down with fruit had been shaken about his hair, scarcely one apple would have reached the ground through it, but an apple would have stayed impaled on each separate hair because of the fierce bristling of his hair above his head. The hero's light rose from his forehead, as long and as thick as a hero's fist and it was as long as his nose, and he was filled with rage as he wielded the shields and urged on the charioteer and cast sling-stones at the host. As high, as thick, as strong, as powerful and as long as the mast of a great ship was the straight stream of dark blood which rose up from the very top of his head and dissolved into a dark magical mist like the smoke of a palace when a king comes to be waited on in the evening of a winter's day.⁴⁶

The description of Cú Chulainn's bodily fluidity is reminiscent of figures from manuscripts such as the Book of Kells. Amid the landscape cues of the texts, and the Ulster Cycle's Otherworld trope, the image is fractured, to use Carr's terminology, but also melded in a common frame with its reader; so, vice versa, is the subject of the viewer-reader, as the art opens to environmental perspective. Forms are reintegrated by carefully modulated play of pattern across the text, again following Carr. But unlike the effect of Cubist style and the particulars of late Byzantine iconography she cites, this early Irish Sea style is grounded through the Otherworld trope in terrain. Yet in Ur-iconography of Christ in the period, such as in the Sinai Christ, the written or visual text is (in the modern iconography writer Damianos' words) "an organic part, an extension, and a perpetuation" of the Incarnation in the physical world.⁴⁷ The sparkling topography of the Otherworld trope (and the light of otherworldly beings

in it) could type the presence of what became the “all-pervasive and scintillating gold background” of Byzantine icons, which, as Damianos notes further, banishes any fictive pictorial space, casting of shadows, centralized figuring of sunlight, or penetrating total perspective. The result mediates interrelations of imagery. Personal physicality is respected without binarization of the spiritual and physical, and the resulting artistic poise integrates body and soul.⁴⁸ In raucous secular literature of the Irish Sea such as the Ulster Cycle, the sum effect of the aesthetic is parallel in certain respects. Thematically it matches, from a different cultural context, the “other icons” of Byzantine culture: The plethora of fantastic, erotic, and mythical visual images and types, ostensibly secular and often from an imagined pre-Christian past, integrated into Christian contexts.⁴⁹ Cultural and social differences played a role in development of distinctive early Irish landscape narratives in a less materially wealthy and more rural environment. But a shared theological semiotic of the imagination and ascetic practice formed the link between desert and archipelago.

Early Irish art is distinguished by linking the Christian iconographic style developed in the East to the physical environment and economy of archipelagic vernacular cultures—just as both Eriugena and Augustinus Hibernicus in their cosmological writings syncretically link emphases of the energy and identity theories, for a stronger focus on the physical world, as discussed in chapter three.⁵⁰ So too Irish illuminated manuscript art (as developed in the formative period of the Otherworld trope into the ninth century) incorporates Byzantine- and Coptic-like themes and perspectives, while emphasizing in carpet pages and interlace designs more of a contemplative landscape perspective with stylized natural features.⁵¹ The aesthetic and the ascetic oddly shadow one another here. As Abba Nesteros put it to Cassian’s literary persona in the Egyptian desert, the closeness to the mystery behind the veil of physical nature, feeling the energy of the metonymic veil, involves adepts “attaching themselves very closely to God by the silence of the desert.”⁵² Of Irish visual design style, Richardson writes:

The forms are so carefully integrated that time is needed to unravel the way that they have been put together. Geometric art elsewhere can often be clear-cut, making a direct statement. The explicit open designs of Anglo-Saxon garnet brooches or the complex geometric construction of Islamic art are a world apart from these elusive Irish designs, where the eye is led on without rest. The quality of elusion is a special feature of Celtic art. Obviousness and rigidity are avoided at all costs. It is a balancing act between the abstract and the concrete. At the same time, ambiguity was favoured. Shapes could imply several meanings, changing and disappearing, adding to the general richness.⁵³

Such elusive visual fusing of physicality (the concrete) and imagination (the abstract) not surprisingly shows analogues in rhetorical tropes. Carruthers uses punning as rhetorical analogy for open-ended aspects of later medieval architecture, fusing natural and imaginative meanings with a twist, while referencing the origins of this (in her view) in early medieval allegories (including Hiberno-Latin ones) of biblical tabernacle and heavenly city.⁵⁴ There is a punning fusion

of nature and culture involved in Irish artistic synthesis. But metonymy again is the most relevant master trope. The latter's emphasis on contiguity fits the energized paradox of distinction fused with physical integration, in both Byzantine iconography and early Irish Otherworld narrative, an environmental "inverse perspective."

Two pages from the Book of Kells (probably *ca.* 800 from the Columban foundation on Iona, though its provenance is unproven), whose images are shown in figures 5.3–5.6, illustrate this early Christian inverse perspective at work. In the "chi-rho" page, letters are part of an interweaving of human, angelic, animal, plant, and curvilinear patterns, which echo in style pre-Christian Irish as

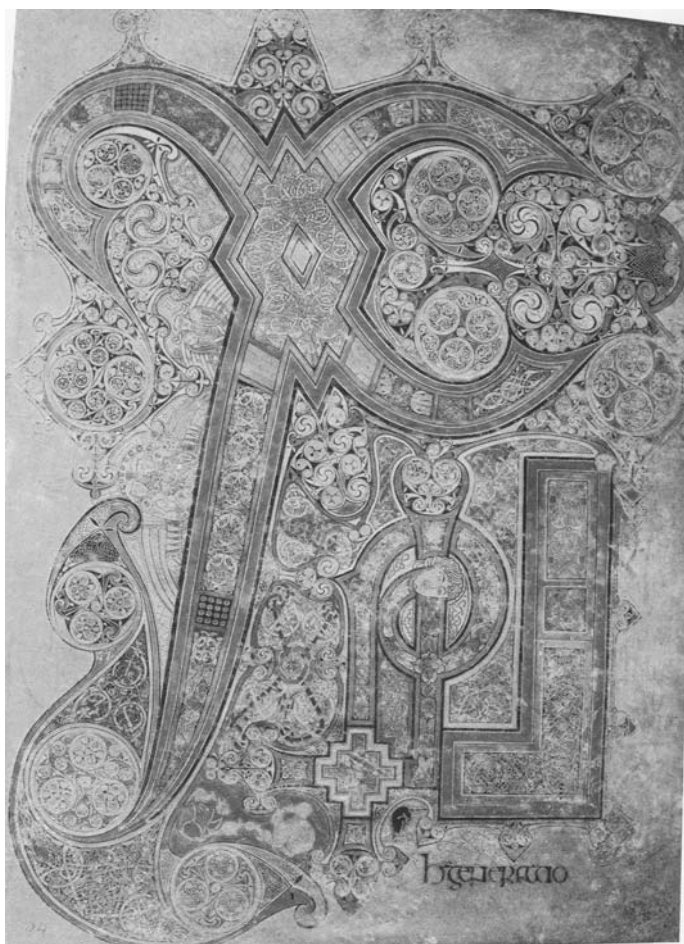


Figure 5.3 The Chi-rho letter symbols for Christ, from the Book of Kells, fol. 34R, from the opening words of Matthew 1:18. (Image courtesy of Trinity College Library, Dublin.)

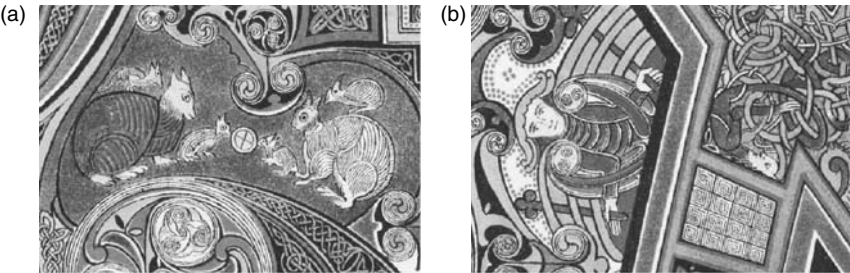


Figure 5.4 Reconstructed details are from J.H. Todd, *Descriptive Remarks on Illuminations in Certain Ancient Irish Manuscripts* (London, 1869).



Figure 5.5 The Book of Kells Eusebian canons, fol. 5R (Trinity College Library).

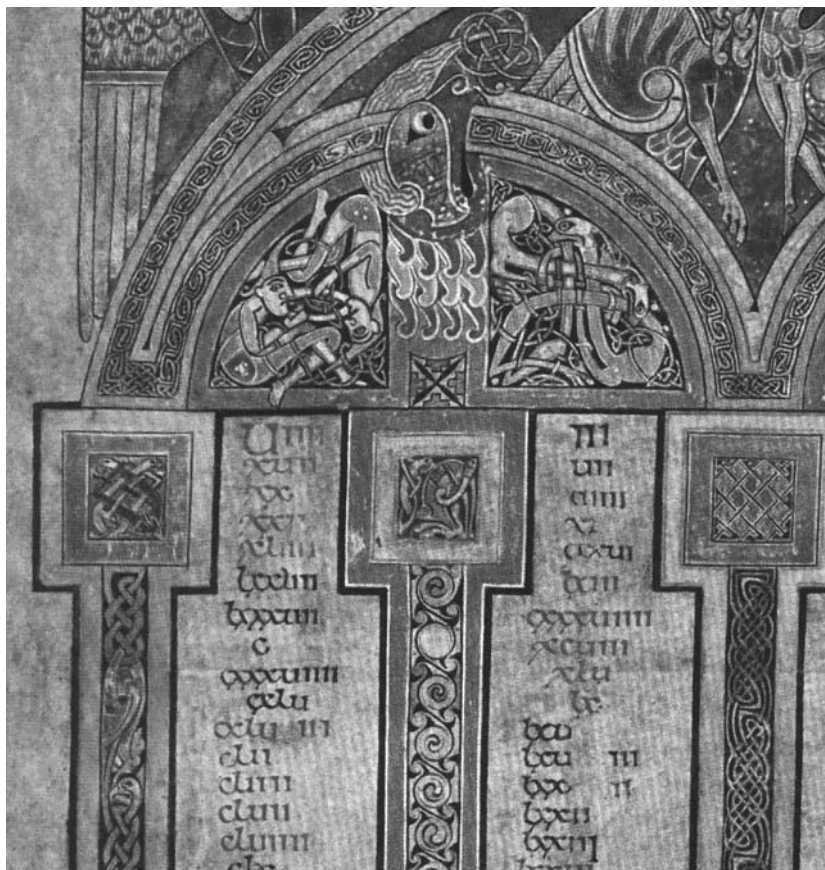


Figure 5.6 A detail from the Book of Kells canon table; note the inverse perspective (Trinity College Library).

well as Byzantine and Germanic forms. The letters seem projected outward at the reader. The relation of *Logos* and *logoi* and physical world inherent in the theme and style of the text-image reflects doctrines behind iconography in the era as well. The Kells canon table (a list of parallel citations from the gospels in figures 5.5–5.6) can be compared in detail with one from a Carolingian manuscript of about the same era in figure 5.7. The latter exhibits more a faux naturalism (despite fantastic elements) typical of “normal” perspective in late-medieval and modern Western art. The Kells table details show again inverse perspective at work: Images in effect reach out to and engage the viewer-reader from an exteriorized plane. Iconographic inverse perspective “thrusts focal points out at us . . . reminding us of our distance from heavenly things,”⁵⁵ but also shaping a sense of relationship between them and our earthly place. Likewise, in early Irish art, in a stereographic effect of two levels of perspective, “the surface has an exquisite variety of texture, yet, at the same time the eye can easily grasp a coherent design,”⁵⁶ as the historian Kathleen Hughes reminded



Figure 5.7 A Carolingian canon table, roughly contemporary to the Book of Kells, showing a subject-object perception of spatial depth: more *trompe l'oeil* than inverse perspective, a proto-modern viewpoint. Gospels of St. Médard of Soissons, fol. 7V (Le Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris).

us. Objectification is repelled but relationship is shaped, as in the two levels of landscape of the Otherworld trope. Some commentators on illuminated manuscripts such as Kells again have speculated on their having been fashioned as stereoscopic illusions.⁵⁷

The early medieval rhetorical practice of ekphrasis or textual framing also expresses the environmental perceptual model. Paul the Silentiary wrote in the sixth century an elaborate verse ekphrasis of the Hagia Sophia in Constantinople

that interrelated integrally the physical realities of building materials with the natural world, place names, and heavenly beauty (in what could be called a para-“Celtic” style, contrasting with the less physically oriented ekphrases of Carolingian and Scholastic writers). It in effect places the icon in space through words:

Yet who, even in the thundering strains of Homer, shall sing the marble meadows gathered upon the mighty walls and spreading pavements of the lofty church? Mining [tools of] toothed steel have cut these from the green flanks of Carystus and have cleft the speckled Phrygian stone, sometimes rosy mixed with white, sometimes gleaming with purple and silver flowers. There is a wealth of porphyry stone, too, besprinkled with little bright stars that had laden the river-boat on the broad Nile. You may see the bright green stone of Laconia and the glittering marble with waxy veins found in the deep gullies of the Iasian peaks, exhibiting slanting streaks of blood-red and livid white; the pale yellow with swirling red from the Lydian headland; the glittering crocus-like golden stone which the Libyan sun, warming it with its golden light, has produced on the steep flanks of the Moorish hills; that of glittering black upon which the Celtic crags, deep in ice, have poured here and there an abundance of milk...⁵⁸

Paul writes further of rowed columns as “high-crested, blooming like a grove with bright flowers,” and of how “the mason, weaving together with his hands thin slabs of marble, has figured upon the walls connected arcs laden with fruit, baskets and leaves, and has represented birds perched on boughs...”⁵⁹ But this overall impression is hardly explicit to modern eyes in evidence of the visual art, as the art historian James Trilling notes. Rather, the stylized details of the stone surface itself are fused with textual ekphrasis. Trilling writes, “The combination of Byzantine rhetorical conventions, a love of nature strong enough, in its unfamiliar way, to raise marble slabwork to a high art, and a pervasive, sometimes credulous faith, made a perfect climate for the appearance of miraculous images.”⁶⁰ One is reminded by Paul’s text of vivid color descriptions in early Irish narratives (and the vibrant color schemes of Insular illuminated manuscripts), as well as the identification of the Otherworld with both elements of the natural and artistic world, as if the two were integrally related. Paul’s ekphrasis in this sense is qualitatively different from the kind of mnemonic and allegorical structural descriptions of fictive buildings common in Carolingian and Scholastic writings and Augustinian traditions of aesthetics.⁶¹ Indeed the stylistic, seemingly non-naturalistic aspects both of Byzantine art and of early Irish narrative need to be reconsidered in light of what we now know of the prejudices of modern categorizations. Trilling argues that to take the words of Paul the Silentiary and the visual art of Byzantium seriously on their own terms, “would imply that the Byzantines could be at least as sensitive as we are to the beauties of nature, although they expressed it in ways that seem almost incomprehensible today.” In early Christian art, “abstraction may not be a sign of increasing spirituality [privileged over physical concerns] but of a very different cultural change, the transfer of aesthetic responsibility from the artist to the viewer...the viewer was expected to fill in the blanks mentally, using

his or her imagination to make the image 'real.'"⁶² This is where the analogy between early Christian iconography and the narrative construction of other-worldly landscape in the Ulster Cycle finally emerges most fully. Here we see again the fantastic realism of the inverse perspective. As iconographic scholar Leonid Ouspensky described it

A man stands, as it were, at the start of a pathway which is not concentrated on some point in depth, but which unfolds itself before him in all its immensity. Inverse perspective does not draw in the eye of the spectator; on the contrary it holds it back, precluding the possibility of its penetrating and entering into the image in depth; and it concentrates the attention on the image itself.⁶³

The contrast to the subjectively objectifying panorama of modern landscape aesthetics traces back to Augustinian semiotics. Augustine concluded that "Whether this [particular] image corresponds to reality, which is rare, or not, what is important is not to believe in it, but to achieve another worthwhile knowledge which is suggested by this representation."⁶⁴ It is the latter metaphorical/allegorical approach that underlies modern Western notions of landscape, as distinct from the metonymy of the iconographic. As Byzantinist Gilbert Dagron noted, Augustine's view "leaves figurative representation on the level of individual imagination and accepts the image only as a necessary but insufficient transition stage."⁶⁵ As the Anglo-Saxonist Barbara Raw notes in her study of theology and art in early England,

Augustine's understanding of signs or symbols was that they had no direct connection with something beyond themselves: they were merely triggers which prompted mental processes... For Augustine, the aim was to rise above these sense impressions to a purely intellectual apprehension of the divine. For Dionysius [and his intellectual heir, the theoretician of Christian iconography, John of Damascus], on the other hand, the divine nature was so completely other that humans needed the support of material images.⁶⁶

The Dionysian-Damascene focus on relational place in interactive perception (picked up by Eriugena and evident in early Irish Sea art and narratives) expressed an active connection of memory, image, and body to text in monastic practice.⁶⁷ In St. John of Damascus' famous eighth-century defense and explication of icons, he discusses a type of iconography that includes both written narratives and visual images, arousing memory of past events or persons as models for life practice.⁶⁸ Likewise, Cassian's desert conferences on prayer with Abba Isaac involve a sense of no real distinction between images and words.⁶⁹ Rather than Evagrius' more Neoplatonic sense of trying to forget, delete, and replace earlier carnal memories, Cassian's desert dialogues seem to emphasize reconnection of the mind psychosomatically to a spiritual identity of the human heart (in the image of God, including the spiritual and the physical). He compares this process to milling and digesting thought and perception into a pure heart—the heart being a nexus of intellect, feeling, and body.⁷⁰ Just before a comparison of psychosomatic asceticism to physical

metamorphosis in the process of milling, Abba Moses in the Sketis desert tells the personas of Cassian and his companion Germanos of the apophatic value of iconographic engagement with the world:

God is not only to be known in His blessed and incomprehensible being, for this is something which is reserved for His saints in the age to come. His is also to be known from the grandeur and beauty of His creatures, from His providence which governs the world day by day, from His righteousness and from the wonders which He shows to His saints in each generation. When we reflect on the measurelessness of His power and His unsleeping eye which looks upon the hidden things of the heart and which nothing can escape, we are filled with the deepest awe, marveling at Him and adoring Him. When we consider that He numbers the raindrops, the sand of the sea and the stars of heaven, we are amazed at the grandeur of His nature and His wisdom.⁷¹

Rather than just advocating the blanket denial of carnal thoughts, Cassian writes of a practical displacement of them, dislocating or over-mapping habits of thought and perception, redirecting and transfiguring erotic passions in effect, as by milling.⁷² In one of his accounts, Abba Isaac responds to a monk's anthropomorphic view of God with an apophatic view of the essence of God (and of people in God's image), urging his listeners to replace objectified sense images by reciting relationally a verse from Psalms. This stylized formula for contemplation is a proto-*hesychasm* akin to Greek monastic practice of repetition of the "Jesus Prayer."⁷³ It seeks to integrate the intellect and body through the word-image, grounding the intellect in the heart or nature of the image of God in which dwells authentic human being. In *hesychasm* ("quietude"), word is in effect metonymic image, relating the spiritual and the physical.⁷⁴ Given the equation of words and images, such monastic practice quickly became interwoven with the use of visual icons, bodily rhythms (breathing and movements sometimes compared to yoga), and liturgical cycles that uncover the Cassian-Maximian synthesis of Evagrian spiritualism and Macarian physicality.⁷⁵ Thus iconographic perspective becomes an environmental rhetoric of the bodily practice of place.⁷⁶ Experiences such as singing a psalm, a chanter's voice, an elder's exhortation, speaking with an elder, the downfall or death of a colleague, or recollecting one's own torpor regretfully could spur the highest form of prayer. The Maximian identification of *logoi* and images again provided the opening for a bodily practice linked to iconographic cosmology, a kind of practice of visual theory perhaps also reflected on the islands in the particular scenic beauty of so many Irish Sea monastic sites.⁷⁷

Augustine in his *De Doctrina Christiana* developed the famous image of the spoils of Egypt in explaining how and why aspects of "earthly" pre-Christian texts could be reused.⁷⁸ In it the tropes and *topoi* of antiquity are rich clothing and treasures, manmade artifacts of arbitrary meaning that could be plucked and re-embedded in a Christian allegorical context. What emerged in subsequent developments of Augustine's notion was the sense, as in Gregory's exegesis of the vision of Ezekiel 40:1–47, of a type of verbal *pictura* that is *allegoria*,⁷⁹ of art

as a holistic, illusory (in the sense we today would call naturalistic) allegory that would develop into modern Western landscape and virtual reality. Contrary to such an object-centered “scavenger hunt” view of composite literary reconstruction as landscape, Cassian’s description of meditation and contemplation as milling and digestion⁸⁰ involves a physically organic emphasis on transformation and connectivity, exemplified by Basil of Caesarea’s exhortation to gather the best nectar from the flowers of such texts to make spiritual honey.⁸¹ The result of the Basil-Cassian emphases in texts or images is iconographic art that paradoxically is more “physical,” more grittily high-fibered if you will, and hence to modern tastes used to the intellectual equivalent of processed foods, more abstractly stylized—like a series of haiku or snapshots, rather than sustained cinematic pageant of “reality” clad in flowing Hollywood-like garments. The Cassian-Basilian theory is that of “narratives-in-the-icon,” as distinct from the Augustinian “icons-in-the-narrative.” The framing Otherworld landscape in early Irish tales is in effect the icon in which the narratives are read. Thus the Anglo-Saxon scholar Aldhelm (a partial though somewhat skeptical product of Irish teaching) used Basil’s metaphor of the nectar-gathering bee in what probably was a criticism of Irish rhetoric as “honey-sweet in the celestial riddles of dark questions.”⁸² But the stylistic naturalism resulting from Augustinian semiotics as they would develop in European culture across the Middle Ages resulted in a more ecologically removed cultural view of human relations with the earth.

By contrast, a more environmentally semiotic style of writing reflects a border between the prelinguistic and linguistic, triangulating between iconographic imagery, bodily practice of place, and topographic landscape. Psychoanalytic theorist Julia Kristeva relates that border to the psychological state of rejection, a recalling of “the dialectical moment of the generating of significance” when an aspect of prelinguistic experience is negated by language as it is turned into a linguistic sign. A sense of death (a realization of mortality and limitation) is relocated within the signifier, “exploding the subject toward heterogeneous materiality.”⁸³ In early Irish Sea literary cultures, incarnational Christianity provides the psychological model for a somewhat parallel process. Kristeva sees Christianity’s basis in the heterogeneous body of Christ as a splitting or rejection of the subject by proxy. It involves a heterogeneity of subject that explains the tradition’s appeal in expressing “essential dramas that are internal to the becoming of each and every subject,” calling the symbolized back to a meta-linguistic semiotic through the scission of death and life in the body at its center.⁸⁴ This forms a basis for the iconographic-metonymic aesthetic described here. The Trinitarian shift based in Augustine’s doctrines in the West (discussed in chapter one), following Kristeva’s view, involved an identification of the Real with the Imaginary at the expense of interaction between the Real and the Symbolic. The Symbolic (the webs of culture potentially relating the image of selfhood to larger communities and contexts in exteriorized and ecological ways, through earlier, more semiotized patterns of intersubjectivity) became marginalized. A sense of active Imaginary direction of the Symbolic

was galvanized: an instrumentally magical approach to the world, encouraging a technological subject and manipulation of the environment. By contrast, and on a larger scale of physical Creation as iconographic, Basil wrote this environmental credo for the iconographic style:

In the beginning God created a wonderful order . . . a most desirable beauty . . . You are now able to conceive the invisible through what is visible in the world . . . I want the created order to penetrate you with so much admiration that everywhere, wherever you may be, the least plant may bring to you the clear remembrance of the Creator.⁸⁵

Thus the origin of the whole genre of holy icons was traced physically to the holy napkin of Christ, “the image not made by hands,” in Luke’s inscribing of the image of Mary, and in other tangible relics and Holy Land sites.⁸⁶ And relationship had developed over time in the Eastern Mediterranean between venerated sites of the Holy Land, relics of holy people, and so-called Antiochene-style detailed exegesis of the surface of Scripture as emulated by many early Irish texts. The Iona abbot Adomnán wrote of such places in his seventh-century *De Locis Sanctis* about the Holy Land. Those sites he writes about are not wholly Other, as religious scholar Thomas O’Loughlin notes, because they are reachable from Ireland, but are worlds apart qualitatively, and in them time and space are compressed as in a liturgy.⁸⁷ Adomnán’s work in one sense is a response to Augustine’s voicing, in his excursus on biblical semiotics and theophany, *De Doctrina Christiana*, of the need for explication of biblical placenames, locales, and events,⁸⁸ but, in another sense, recording the travels of Arculf through a real otherworldly landscape goes beyond Augustine’s desire for a hermeneutical map of scripture, to a more dialogic approach. The difference in emphasis is evident in comparing Augustine’s monologic metaphorical and allegorical exegesis of Jerusalem in *De Civitate Dei*, with its somewhat discrete two tiers of literal and spiritual readings, and Adomnán’s *immram*-like travelogue. The latter reflects the more multiply interlayered exegetical emphasis of Cassian (itself explained in texts that are a travelogue of the desert in many voices) as a basis for otherworldly landscape.⁸⁹ Likewise the hagiographical landscape ekphrasis of Cogitosus’ *Vita* of Brigit sweeps geographically from her birthplace in the *Táin* country of County Louth and around the Irish countryside to the church at Kildare.⁹⁰ Circuits of early Lives of St. Patrick and the later *Acallam na Senórach* show similarly ekphratic landscape as well.

The early medieval Christian relation of topography and narrative emerged in the Eastern Mediterranean. Around the Irish Sea it was adapted to the archipelago. In the adaptability of a common aesthetic to different terrains and ecosystems and traditions, there was acknowledgment of the environment as a source for the imagination central both to the adaptation and to a joining of the haptic and the visual in narrative theory and practice. In the secular realm of story-telling around the Irish Sea, seeking to relate in retrospect the native and the ancestral typologically to the kingdom of God, a distinctive contribution

to perceptual models of nature emerged in a melding of landscape and iconographic style that is called here a cosmic imaginarium—in essence an environmental “empatharium,” narratively shaping place-landscape after iconographic visual theory. Subsequent political and cultural change marginalized and virtually eliminated that older worldview in the islands, and this distinctive practice of early Western landscape would be lost. But it was not wholly forgotten, as we shall see.



St. Ninian's Cave, facing an inlet of the Irish Sea; traditionally a hermitage of the putatively fifth-century saint; site of early Christian inscribed stones. Ninian's monastic foundation at nearby Whithorn was reputedly a center for transmission of Christianity from successor realms of Roman Britain to southern Scotland and probably Ireland. (Author's photo.)

CHAPTER 6

ARCHIPELAGO AND EMPIRE

Many cultures describe their “story-shaped world”¹ spatially in terms of a household, hall, or home. Delaware Indian traditions did this in tales of a cosmic longhouse.² Early Irish texts sometimes described the three households of heaven, hell, and earth.³ Paul’s cosmic use of the term *economia*,⁴ and the modern neologism *ecology*, both harken back etymologically and semantically to a view of the earth or cosmos as a household. In early vernacular narrative landscapes of Europe’s Atlantic archipelago, the preeminent formative Insular motifs of the “cosmic longhouse” arguably were the otherworldly mound-portals or *síde* of early Irish stories, together with that of the lord’s mead hall of Anglo-Saxon literature.⁵ These could be extended into larger landscapes, as well. As we saw in chapter three, the Irish mirrored the chthonic Otherworld in the sea.⁶ But in Anglo-Saxon hagiography, the eighth-century locale of St. Guthlac’s mound mirrored the mead hall in *Beowulf* as transformative citadel-tomb opposed to surrounding fenlands,⁷ even as the sea figured alienation in Anglo-Saxon poetry.⁸

Both of these symbolic complexes of *habitus* or in-dwelling arguably emerged into literary prominence in the foundational eighth century, reflecting and shaping the spatial practice of their cultures at a time of emerging ethnic identities. The Irish Otherworld portal dwelt in a spatial temporality that turned any objective matrix of space inside-out. The places of the dead become places of the living in keeping with the *túath* and monastery being communities of both the living and the dead. People of the past return from them as witnesses of the Christian future. Confined spaces become seemingly infinite. Interior spaces become exteriorized and cosmic. Manmade and the “natural” become indistinguishable and interpenetrating.⁹ The Irish *síde* (paralleled in Welsh notions of the Otherworld *gorsedd*), unlike the Anglo-Saxon mead hall, arguably externalized rather than internalized cosmic connections with dynamic larger realities. It did this partly by interweaving different streams of narrative time into a landscape trope. By contrast, the Anglo-Saxon hall and Guthlac’s fortress-mound were interiorized spaces in linear history, encouraging of a colonial view of space and time, even when expressing a necessarily qualified “uncarpentered” interiority.¹⁰ The timbered Germanic house prefigures the morphing of civically corporate Byzantine church architecture into the proprietary monarchical space of

Charlemagne's Palace-Chapel at Aachen, an "emphasis shifted from connecting surfaces to separating lines."¹¹

Small wooden oratories that dotted the Irish Sea province, however, like the mound-portals of Otherworld narratives, embraced a regional and elemental landscape. Alternate temporalities of the Otherworld shaped both a unified cultural image (desired by the learned class and its political patrons) and, simultaneously, a dynamic landscape-narrative of resistance to domination by any linear history of emerging hegemonic narrative.¹² That literary effect always needs to be qualified by awareness of the danger of exoticizing the ruthless political and social realities of Irish Sea realms themselves, and complex nuancing of cultural differences. But the Otherworld trope's distinctive resistance to hegemony also needs to be recognized *as* cultural difference, to avoid appropriative erasure of a different sort. For the Anglo-Saxon type of colonial *habitus* (more in line with developing continental models, especially among the Franks) became a prototype for dominant Euro-American spatial practices, involving what Fabienne L. Michelet calls, "an insecurity about boundaries, a constant fear of the outside."¹³

This chapter returns to a summary of historical contexts that helped to shape the medieval Otherworld trope around the early Irish Sea (political/ecclesiastical, economic, linguistic, temporal, sexual, and external cultural confrontations), marking the trope's appropriated afterlife in English literature beyond the end of that cultural region. The origins of Western identification of landscape with colonization (and the negative implications of this for views of the natural world) of course go back much further than the post-Roman period. It is in Virgil's *Eclogues* that we find the most influential articulation of Classical literary *locus amoenus*. Extended into pastoral landscape with imperial undertones, this became the prototype for much modern Western landscape art, visual and literary.¹⁴ In Virgil's poetic treatments, "The *land* has become the *state*,"¹⁵ as Derek Pearsall and Elizabeth Salter argued in their magisterial literary survey *Landscapes and Seasons in the Medieval World* (1973). Yet a sub-Roman desert ascetic-ethic at odds with Virgilian imperialism rewrote cosmologies of both Epicureanism and Neoplatonism, their atomism and sense of fixed hierarchy of orders subverted by incarnational Christianity's egalitarian stress on moral personal relationism. Christian views of nature melded with indigenous regional concerns of decentralized Roman "borderland" societies of both the Eastern Mediterranean and Irish Sea. And resulting landscape narratives of the Atlantic archipelago were distinguished in degree from the interiorized hierarchy set in place culturally by the Augustinian transformation of church into empire in the West.¹⁶ The latter led to "the medieval tendency to close off the garden against the wilderness,"¹⁷ or Heorot against the fens. This took hold in Anglo-Saxon culture because of its distinctive origins as a colonizing yet consciously synthetic ethnicity, constructed in a fusion of its foundational papal mission (a conversion team sent by Gregory the Great) with conquering Anglo-Saxon pagan hero forebears. It expressed predominantly in Anglo-Saxon literature not only alienating and allegorical descriptions of nature but pastoral *topoi*. Such themes, Catherine A.M. Clarke notes, mythologized a complex of land, space, and identity as a

basis for a totalizing overlay of nationhood (first politically for Mercia, then for a merged Anglo-Saxon identity), contrasting with multiplex landscape and temporalities of Celtic Otherworld narratives.¹⁸

If, as historian T.M. Charles-Edwards argues, social and political orders were distinctively one in early Ireland (from which survive the largest extant literature of the Otherworld trope and most historical records of the early Irish Sea zone),¹⁹ power was centered more on networks of landscape than on other insignia. The lack of central government, complex networks of contractual obligations, and the strain of developing regional paramountcies—these were all backgrounded by the economic centrality of border “wilderness” as a source of surplus wealth from grazing, supporting the complex cross-obligations of social hierarchies and the roving *fian* groups, which were needed both to maintain and to define social units. As historical sociologist Nerys Patterson suggests:

multi-household agrarian co-operative groups were a normal type of social organization in early and later medieval Ireland, alongside more nucleated farms operated by co-residential extended families . . . lordship depended on control of the social organization that could dominate large areas of waste, not merely local access to resources . . . It seems that the basic political entity, the *túath*, was an agglomeration of communities that shared the problems of inescapable social interaction with each other, on account of shared pastoral use of waste[land] . . . Once such a structure of social relationships was in place the elite enforced a degree of egalitarianism as to exploitation of natural resources upon the farmers.²⁰

Fluid social definitions of landscape centered on the communal *mag* or green (a term also for milking yards of individual households, perhaps eponymous with the name of the goddess Macha, whose curse plays a major role in the *Táin*). This was an ecological synecdoche perhaps for Patterson’s central “wastelands” and the Otherworld as well.²¹

The social landscape of early medieval Ireland was archipelagic in parallel to Irish Sea geography, as noted in chapter one, and described by Charles-Edwards as a “multiplicity of hierarchies of status.” Its entwined layers also shaped the Otherworld trope. It included hierarchies for scholars, anchorites, holy people/saints, clergy of prominent churches, bishops, abbots, professional poets, kings, and warriors. (The fact that a woman could be a part of one or more clan hierarchies was perhaps one reason why women may have had a certain flexibility of rights in an early Ireland that was strongly patriarchal but perhaps matrifocal in certain ways too.²²) Monastic and church *familia* and *paruchia* networks²³ were overlaid with ecclesiastical networks (including ones competing for archbishopric status²⁴) even as regional dynastic networks overlaid the local *túatha*.²⁵ All of these interconnecting layers contributed to “narrative implanted in the landscape,” with innumerable “places that functioned as narrative prompts,” Charles-Edwards writes. Such places were not only a source of social order but a way of accommodating change as a “shift of perspective within the tradition”—as ongoing narrative adaptations within a continuing framework of respect for landscape greater than any singular political or personal power.²⁶ The violation of prehistoric monuments in such a landscape was justification for war and “underlying

the social organization of time lay the cyclical rhythms of the animals that sustained human life," Dáibhí Ó Cróinín notes.²⁷ Kingship across such multiplicitous realms of varying sizes was segmentary in power and succession, evolving amid often dispersed power networks. It resonated with myths of cosmic kingship paralleling conceptualizations of saints as founders of realms of monastic *familiae*.²⁸ Bart Jaski's work, following on others, has shown Irish kingship analogous in many ways to contemporary kingship elsewhere in Western Europe.²⁹ But, as Robin Chapman Stacey notes, "kingship and law are two of the areas in which the Roman-inspired model of the Germans clashed most visibly with the much more diffuse and less centralized model of the Celts," and the importance of differences between Germanic and Celtic kingship still lies in "how different they contrived to look."³⁰ Even in modern times, for example, it was centralizing Germanic-rooted monarchies that headed the West's national churches.

Again, issues of time and power cohere in landscape. Anglo-Saxon realms ultimately reimagined their cultural landscape in the post-Roman world as a return of empire in ecclesiastical-ethnic form. This morphed into the expanded proto-national empire of Ireland's conqueror-to-be, the Normans (laying aside an earlier attempted Northumbrian/Anglo-Saxon invasion of Ireland in 684), with their landscape-narrative of the Domesday Book. By contrast, Irish culture had forged complex multiple social hierarchies in an apparent concerted effort, in the seventh and eighth centuries, to integrate narratively its cosmopolitan heritage within a privileged indigenous one. The result melded alternate temporalities in early Irish narratives.³¹ Often the narratives seem to meld all four modes of patristic and natural time and non-time previously discussed,³² enabled by the time-reversing, d.j.-like "scratching" of metonymy, a landscape trope that can both hide and disclose alternate times and histories in its fusion of words and physicality in place.³³ These simultaneous alternate temporalities³⁴ reflect what perceptual historian Harald Kleinschmidt calls "the aggregate sum of qualified places," not modern "human penetration across and into space" in linear time. The latter has its roots in Augustine's shaping of perception, which Kleinschmidt opposes to Eriugena's.³⁵

The compilation of what became the flagship narrative of the Ulster Cycle, the *Táin*, was likely related to the intersection in the land of such alternate temporalities with the ambitions of centralizing dynasties. Other elements in its social contexts included intensifying partition of central "wilderness areas" and pressure on central monastic areas, resistance of an older view of ascetic monasticism to aspects of these changes, aspirations of the monastic learned class and its patrons for a fragmented-yet-unified image of Ireland, and incoming Viking raids and Scandinavian presence. The Celticist John V. Kelleher proposed that a complex of Ulster-Cycle-related texts emerged from monastic communities of Louth and Clonmacnois, shaping pseudo-history and landscape stretching back to biblical times.³⁶ Much of the action of the *Táin* is centered in the area around Louth, the First Recension seems to have been written at Clonmacnois, and there are known connections between the two.³⁷ Kelleher articulated in detail a theory that the *Táin* as political allegory reflected views of a network of members of the *céli Dé* ("clients of God"; essentially ascetic pastoral-care activists in the early

Irish church) resisting increasing dominance by the Cenél nÉogain (a northern branch of the Uí Néill dynasty) at the ecclesiastical center of Armagh.³⁸ Westley Follett's recent study of the *céli Dé* makes the case (in line with other revisionist work) that the "movement" had not so much the "reform" intent that it had been given by modern scholarship, but rather was a more conservative and multiplicitous class of monastics in the period. In Follett's view, it was connected by interest in combining traditional asceticism with pastoral care and a personal relation to God, as "clients."³⁹ Extant texts relative to the movement suggest its rigorous asceticism in continuity of previous practices, but combined with an emphasis on providing *anmchairdes* ("soul-friendship") or spiritual guides to lay-tenants of the church in the larger varied proto-urban monastic communities in which monastics lived in separate enclosures. This included continued emphasis on the type of penitential practices discussed in chapter four.⁴⁰ Historian Benjamin Hudson recently has sketched how the *céli Dé* ultimately became identified with an older Irish Sea social order, as shown by King David I of Scotland's need to break their power at St. Andrews with the backing of the Cistercian Pope Eugenius III in the mid-twelfth century.⁴¹ The spread of stone church architecture and more systematized and centralized documentation of land ownership were all part of the process of ecclesiastical change, together with an overcoming of the past support of Irish clergy in the eleventh century for Holy Roman imperial interests against the papacy. It wasn't until the Synod of Kells in 1152 (around the time that the *Táin's* Second Recension appeared in the Book of Leinster) that the process was more or less completed organizationally.⁴²

As Hudson figures the background of the struggle between Connacht and Ulster in the *Táin* from the perspective of the eleventh and twelfth centuries:

The Connacht heroes were claimed as ancestors by not only the important families of the province, but also the powerful Uí Néill families... lords of Connacht were becoming increasingly powerful in the eleventh century, and they would dominate Ireland during the twelfth. The Ulstermen remained important because of their association with St. Patrick and, by extension Armagh, even though their own political importance was declining. By the eleventh century, Armagh was recognized as the leading church in Ireland, and through their association with that church's patrons the Ulstermen were ensured literary immortality.⁴³

Struggles between old and new cultural worldviews probably related to these complex dynastic politics, as Kelleher suggests.⁴⁴ Apparent institutional resistance of the Armagh hereditary clergy, from the local Airthir hierarchy, to overt domination by the Cenél nÉogain, seems to support Kelleher's general view.⁴⁵ That hereditary network finally came to an end with a "reform" administration at Armagh under Máel Máedóc Ua Morgair (a.k.a. Malachy), an ally of Bernard of Clairvaux (a leading advocate of a new order of Western European church and interior piety, and not coincidentally of the Crusades), in the era between production of the two recensions of the *Táin*.⁴⁶

In Kelleher's theory, the landscape of the *Táin* reflects a particular political situation related to this changing of ecclesiastical orders, placing the shaping of the tale tangentially in a milieu of resistance to the rise of the new Western European

culture. He posits that the failure of Conchobar mac Donnchada of the southern Uí Néill (who had a rival named Ailill—each bearing the name of an opposing king in the *Táin*) to appear against the northern Uí Néill at the decisive battle for Armagh in 827 is expressed in the *Táin*'s central theme of the lack of help for Cú Chulainn from his allies.⁴⁷ Kelleher speculates that Cuanu the abbot of Louth, as an ally of Artrí the abbot of Armagh (probably the son of Conchobar), aware of Conchobar's reluctance to offer military support in the abbatial struggle, had put out the revised *Táin*, adapting older traditions to current political situations, in a satirical mode. The revision rerouted the attack to come from a Connacht associated historically with the northern Uí Néill instead of from Temair/Tara.⁴⁸ In any case, those associated with preservation of the *Táin* in this theory were identified with a more ascetic element in Irish monasticism in a sense in opposition, in the Armagh situation, to further centralization of Irish dynasties that indeed ultimately would lead to the extinction of the old monastic networks.⁴⁹ The Viking threat also could have been used as a figure for dynastic aggrandizement generally, related to a complex of other social stresses.⁵⁰

Along that line, the crack-up finale of the *Táin* (with bulls and armies destroyed) could also reflect political and environmental pressure on "sacred zones" and grazing "wilderness" in the eighth century and up to the Norman Conquest. Charles-Edwards notes:

Early Christian Ireland was based in part on a political deal between the Uí Néill, the Éoganachta (rulers of Munster), and the Connachta. Their frontiers appear to have been placed as sacred zones where monasteries rather than warbands ruled the landscape... The "old order" of early Christian Ireland began to break down before the appearance of the first Vikings, when armies were formed from the semi-lay client-farmers of these midland monasteries... participating in the succession struggles of the kings of Mide and also, more damagingly, in warfare between the Uí Néill and Munster.⁵¹

Armagh was not in a midland boundary zone, yet was in a kind of political border area between Mide and the southern and northern Uí Néill, amid smaller realms with proud mythic histories. N.B. Aitchison draws an extensive picture of the Ulster Cycle as an ideological text designed to bolster legitimacy of dynastic and/or monastic influences as they attempted to control larger ecological units to sustain cattle-based client networks. The Cycle is "a constructed past," a discourse of power representing in story a "timeless socio-political elite."⁵² The apparent satirical frame suggests, however, that super-regional ecological units coveted by dynastic paramountcies ultimately were not considered controllable.

Learned classes in the older ecclesiastical order, in their social role as culture brokers, exhibited a kind of physically iconographic orientation toward text also important in forming the Otherworld trope as landscape.⁵³ Early Hiberno-Latin and Irish developed as literary languages with visual textuality in multilingual discourses.⁵⁴ The tradition of Columba's *Cuilebad*, or liturgical fan, a revered relic of the Irish saint, illustrates the sense of language as shaping place. The fan, according to a twelfth-century Irish voyage tale, originally was a leaf from an otherworldly tree, but the spelling out of its name in an ogam-writing wheel

in the Book of Ballymote suggests the relic also had become a name of wheel-writing in ogam, and thus a symbol linking living natural object to art and writing.⁵⁵ Early Irish legal texts from the eighth century stressed the metonymically physical nature of verbal satire and its compensations, privileging “the value of face” across classes.⁵⁶ Antiochene-style literal and detailed exegesis supported intricately architectonic early Irish and British rhetoric that reflected biblical styles and involved syllable counting, gematria, parallelism, and chiasmus.⁵⁷ As suggested earlier, there also was a strong connection between metonymic tropology and Cassianite asceticism. Desert prayer was a milling and digesting and incarnating of words to nonlinear bodily rhythms⁵⁸: “Sit in your cell. Eat a little every day and have the words of the publican [“Lord have mercy on me”] ever in your heart. Then you can be saved.”⁵⁹

Metonymic landscape motifs in the Celtic trope relate topography to syncopated multiple temporalities that turn boundaries of the Irish cosmic household of the *síde* inside-out by comparison with the Anglo-Saxon mead hall. Indeed, “outside” in early Irish culture dynamically had both positive and negative social meanings. In one story, *Echtrae Nera*,⁶⁰ composed anywhere from the eighth to tenth centuries, the realm of the pagan *síde* at first is associated with death and destruction. And yet, it turns out that the envisioned destruction of a royal center is a prophesied response to an attack in the making on its *síd* by the greedy and selfish “historical” rulers Medb and Ailill. Their disrespect for the Otherworld in effect sets in motion the disastrous and costly cattle raid of the *Táin* narrative. The *síd* becomes the home of the protagonist Nera and his family, including his compassionate otherworldly wife. Life in the *síd* goes on in its timeless state until the end of time, the second coming of Christ. Yet one of the treasures of kingship stolen from the *síd* ends up at Patrick’s seat at Armagh, and comes to bear the name of the pagan king who confronted St. Patrick, to serve as a reminder of the fulfillment of the Otherworld in Christianity as a basis for sovereignty. Likewise we see the exteriorizing of subject in redemptory cosmic cycles in tales of amazingly long-lived elder storytellers. Those include Mongán, an Ulster ruler, the antediluvian Fintan who changed into various animal forms over his long existence, and Túan of the Ulaid, who recalls for Columba’s teacher St. Finnian the coming of Christianity a century earlier.⁶¹ Such decentering of landscape (and by association, time) is seen too in a famous tale from the pseudo-historical *Lebor Gabála Éirenn*, of how three different goddesses of the land give their blessing to the invasion by the sons of Míl, who agree to name the island for each of them. The invaders after arriving must go back onto the sea past the ninth wave before returning (a decentering of position relative to the land), overcoming magic of the Tuatha Dé Danann’s druids as Patrick later would their own.

Such back-and-forth syncopation in early Irish landscape-narrative may find validation in Eriugena’s exegesis of the Seraphim shielding the divine essence in relation with cosmic hierarchies. Eriugena writes of how “divine things are introduced to human minds more, and more clearly, through incompatible similitudes and images of the lowest material things, than through the beautiful forms of celestial and rational things.”⁶² The dialogic tension (the “many voiced” but “one-mouthed” Seraphim)⁶³ between mystery and image shapes a theological

sense of place and time in which both temporal syncopation and inverse perspective unfold through symbolism a landscape of environmental engagement. Such place is reminiscent again of Kristeva's exploration of the semiotic *chora*⁶⁴: Like Augustine, she relates grammar with time, but grammar for Kristeva can potentially reflect energies of the pre-linguistic semiotic realm associated with the *chora*,⁶⁵ relating to metonymic aspects of early Irish textuality. Indeed, feminine associations of the *chora* suggest how sexual difference could entwine temporal difference in social contexts of the Otherworld. When in mainstream Western European literary history we reach *Le Roman de la Rose* and later Dante's *Commedia*, woman has become the crowning sensual glory of a male Paradise. Gender categories of male and female become binarized in Scholasticism more systematically than before. Yet in earlier Christianity, for example, in the groves of Cappadocia, powerfully minded women of the extended clan of Basil of Caesarea and Gregory of Nazianzus had found in Christianity a way of negotiating social power outside rigid constraints of pagan Roman patriarchy (as did, according to his most recent biographer, Gregory of Nazianzus himself, and male monastics).⁶⁶ In early Ireland there likely was similar negotiation, reflected in the Ulster Cycle and tales of the "land of women," in which it was at first a hypermasculine warrior ethic, reflected in the medieval *fianna* (analogous perhaps to Odinic warbands in Germanic societies), with which perhaps Christian women and the new "mandarin class" had to renegotiate a voice through social transformations wrought by Christianization.⁶⁷ Alternative temporality, of dynamic integration-with-difference of the Incarnation/Crucifixion/Resurrection, perhaps narratively informed roles of the sexes in a new overlay landscape in the foundational era of the Otherworld trope. As Christina Harrington claims, "Newly ascendant notions about the right ordering of society, which elsewhere saw women marginalized, in Ireland were adapted to include women and to restate their value and their centrality in the corporate entity of the human community."⁶⁸

Tendencies toward a privileging of alternative nonlinear time, with implications for landscape, by the Irish Christian learned class are glimpsed in its most famous ecclesiastical struggle. The seventh-century Paschal-dating controversy pitted elements of the northern Irish church known as the *Hibernenses*, most notably the Columban monasteries, against the so-called *Romani* faction based in southern Irish and Northumbrian churches, which advocated a more centralized calculation of time. Charles-Edwards points up how biblically related arguments of the *Romani* were based partly on a direct allegorical reading of an astronomical event, the equinox, as metaphor for Christian redemption. Yet the *Hibernenses*, while typically engaging in literal Antiochene-style biblical exegesis, apparently did not embrace the same emphasis on interpreting the natural world in relation to the calendar as fixed allegory.⁶⁹ Irish reckonings of Easter had tended to share earlier Christian perspectives of a dynamic integration of the Passion and Resurrection (a flow seen too in the identification of Passover with the Crucifixion in the gospel of John), rather than concern with dating those events in a wholly distinct sequence, as did the newer Insular system for dating Easter.⁷⁰ The iconographic worldview, based in a non-Augustinian sense of exterior space as relational place, did not stress an exclusive reading of space as centralized text

in abstract, linear time. The back-and-forth of story-shaped worlds embodied in experience of the Otherworld, nonbeing engaged with quotidian life, again provides models for an ecological empathy sought by environmental philosophy today.⁷¹

Beowulf's leap into the mere (in the perhaps eighth-century Old English poem⁷²) symbolized the start of a new literary temporality (and semiotic) in Western European relations with nature. Diving into the waters to grapple with and kill the indigenous matriarch, Grendel's mother, he emerges the individualized hero in linear history, with the Sovereignty goddess slain.⁷³ Rosamond McKitterick notes how in the Carolingian world there was an intensifying "sense of historical and chronological place."⁷⁴ This new linear matrix for historical memory had concomitant effects in a more centralized perception of space and landscape. It is reflected not only in the historical writing of the Anglo-Saxon Bede, but also, as already noted, in a deep-structural sense in Old English landscape-narratives.⁷⁵ The plots of both *Beowulf* and the eighth-century *Lives* of Guthlac⁷⁶ contrast earthly wastelands with potential spiritual reward in the context of an emerging Mercian hegemony.⁷⁷ The texts could be literary equivalents of the roughly contemporary physical construction of Offa's Dyke as a linear earthwork marking a border of Welsh and Anglo-Saxon realms, defining a new cultural pattern of landscape. The same contrast implicitly defines older, more indigenously constructed British-Celtic polities as unredeemed.⁷⁸ In Beowulf's victorious plunge into the interior sea of the mere can be seen the emergence of a model for landscape legitimizing Mercian hegemony over the English landscape.

Beowulf's emergence from the mere likewise can be understood in Kristevan terms as the establishment of the autonomy of the individual hero (and of his warrior/proto-Christian culture) with respect to the natural landscape, the Subject defined and built up by the Other. The problem of the lack of experience of identification with difference that Kristeva sees in Western definitions of individuality relates to the West's objectified and oppositional social relations with both nature and ancestry.⁷⁹ In this context, the description of the mere can be viewed as the construction of a pre-symbolic place, into which the hero injects the symbolic—and himself emerges as a symbol. The differentiation of the Western individual has become interiority in opposition to nature, as has the formation of nationhood, both expressing Gregory the Great's notion that nature is a virtual code, devoid of real meaning until read.⁸⁰

In a Kristevan landscape analysis, the bloody grime of the mere of Grendel's mother, like menstrual blood,⁸¹ is both a reminder of difference and a threat to the social aggregate of patriarchal symbolic order.⁸² With the arrival of Beowulf, the entrance of linear temporality "renders explicit a rupture, an expectation, or an anguish which other temporalities work to conceal."⁸³ Augustine likewise wrote of linear time as related to the grammar of the sentence, and the runic giant sword taken up by Beowulf in the mere is a literate monumental object, reordering the previously chaotic, non-objectified maternal landscape (and destroying its monstrous inhabitants).⁸⁴ What survives of it are the runes on its handle, which tell the foundational story of an antediluvian race, a mirrored

paradigm of Beowulf's own foundational plunge and conquest of the waters, and the ancestral heroes of the past now lost to the Christian Anglo-Saxons. In a sense, the hall of the Danes could not exist without the maternal mere defining it from outside by its role as the abject, what Kristeva calls in another context "the horror that they seize on in order to build themselves up and function."⁸⁵

Reminiscent of the giants' sword, another text important to understanding changing views of nature in the Anglo-Saxon era, *The Dream of the Rood*⁸⁶ (the single most famous Old English text today after *Beowulf*), survived distinctively in its earliest version on remains of a phallic-like ruin, which, however, most scholars think was in original form a stone cross.⁸⁷ Built in the eighth century on a borderland of extreme northwest Northumberland, in the old Celtic-British kingdom of Rheged in the sphere of the old British monastic center of Whithorn⁸⁸ newly under Anglo-Saxon control, the monument's context is colonial, as is that of the textual sword. The monument's runes tell of the victory-cross, however, although some modern commentators compare the monument to an imperial column-marker proclaiming the presence of the Anglo-Saxon church on a frontier.⁸⁹ Yet here the runes are mixed with Latin inscriptions and hybrid Roman-British-Irish-Germanic themes, visual and inscribed. The text of the poem that survives in part on the Ruthwell monument, and in a fuller version from the tenth-century text of the Vercelli book (although perhaps derived from a core verse sung as early as the late seventh century in Northumbria), is from an ecocritical standpoint hybrid and complex.⁹⁰

A voice is given in the poem to nature to talk back, in the words of the cut-down tree/cross and in the crying of creation. The tree becomes arguably an objectified artifact, but dynamically hybridized with the body of the Creator-God, and in relation with the latter a leader of humanity. The inscription on the Ruthwell Cross emphasized Jesus even more directly as God Almighty climbing on the cross, reflecting perhaps the currency in that border area of the early Irish *Bangor Antiphonary's* prayers, with their emphasis on *kenosis*. In the older and fuller context of the Ruthwell Cross (perhaps reflecting in part cross-influences of Columbanian/Ionan monasticism and Anglo-Saxon culture⁹¹), we see a culturally hybrid connection of solar and arboreal symbolism as well.⁹² Its symbolism also includes an iconic combination of runes and art, animals bowing before and being recognized by Christ, and the meeting of the desert saints Paul and Anthony, an Ionan motif. Such contexts are not evident in the later text of the Benedictine Reform-era Vercelli Book poem, farther removed from northwestern British cultural borderlands. We experience here the ultimate iconographic metonym of the Cross combined with the reimagined individual Germanic hero, who, as John M. Hill suggests, likely relates more to Anglo-Saxon Christian politics than mythic pagan archetypes.⁹³ Yet the poem also offers hope for some type of reconciliation, in the weeping Creation.

The hero on the cross in *The Dream of the Rood* is a reflection of a new subjectivity and new individuality presaged by Beowulf's plunge into the nonlinear space-time of the mere. These modes were extended politically and ecclesiologically by the Anglo-Saxon/Frankish cultural combine. But the motif's combination with other themes exemplifies the hybridity of literary issues involving

spatial practice in this era. We empathize with and become the antihero tree in the poem, as the identities of narrator, tree, cross, and Christ intertwine. That empathy is bound with the type of reverse-role imitation highlighted by environmental phenomenology today as essential both for human maturing and for ecological philosophy. It occurs in the iconographic “place between” the text, a specific geographical and historical site in the Holy Land, and a borderland monastic center at Ruthwell. The processes of *kenosis*, *catharsis*, and *kairosis* in the poem, all with combined theological and literary meaning and effect, shape spatial empathy that touches on the ecopoetic, as suggested in Aarne Naess’ deep-ecology rereadings of the Bible.

In the end the effect is problematic. The tree is an artifact, the emphasis is on another world to come. Yet the dynamic art of the tree, bejewelledly radiant and venerated, while oscillating back and forth with the bloodied and wounded Rood, especially given the grounding of the text in the sculptured Ruthwell Cross, prefigures the retro imaginative “green world” of Insular literary tradition as noted by Northrop Frye.⁹⁴ In such connective mythopoesis, famously defined by J.R.R. Tolkien as subcreation,⁹⁵ the Otherworld of the early Irish Sea zone still iconographically lives on in fantasy, even amid the “disenchanted” landscape of twenty-first-century globalization. That popular survival suggests, much like the search for ancient rare plants with therapeutic value in endangered ecosystems, a potential for revived awareness of the importance of “story-shaped worlds” in light of phenomenological psychology: the potential value of environmentally restorative rereading of early landscape-narratives for our culture today. Still, the value of such imaginaries is not merely instrumentalist, but potentially *real* in the eco-phenomenological sense of empathy: Shaping ecology through poetics that themselves are already shaped by ecology, with rhythms of the back-and-forth between worlds, like pulse attuned to hesychastic prayer, shaping realization of life in larger networks.

The eventual relegation of the Otherworld to a literary “green world” (to use Frye’s term) is foreshadowed by a parallel contrast between two early archipelagic narratives that both seem to invoke tree-related liminal environments. One is Rhiannon’s ride in the First Branch of the *Mabinogi* past the waiting Pwyll at the mound of Arberth, whose place name probably means “by the grove,” perhaps from an oak grove. The other is Augustine of Canterbury’s waiting for the homage of the British-Celtic bishops at the oak named for him in Bede’s Anglo-Latin *Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum*.⁹⁶ The first is a nonlinear, otherworldly encounter in topography, which arguably integrates nature and human activity. The second is an event placed in linear time, which distinguishes between “natural” indigenous culture and the new Anglo-Saxon order’s monumental space in linear history, at an exoticized border. There is, of course, a difference in genre between the two narratives. The *Mabinogi* story is dated later than Bede’s, though based on earlier traditions. But similar if less dramatic mythic contrasts to Bede’s landscape style could be found in earlier Irish and Welsh “pseudo-histories.” Both foundational descriptions involve places of “real” geographic landscape, associated by name with trees likely numinous in tradition.⁹⁷ Both involve a certain cloaking of cultural as well as natural history in textual landscape. But the

transparent spatial engagement of cultural strata in the Welsh narrative (in which native mythology is still apparent) shapes the difference in landscapes.

Bede's temporality would come to be figured as dominant. But the landscape of the *Mabinogi*, and those of the early Irish Sea zone generally, remain obscured yet still activated tropes of iconographic resistance to the Western tendency to reform nature into interiorized virtual reality. They remain influences on, or at least supporting analogues with, green worlds of English literature to come—through fourteenth-century revival in Chaucer and the Gawain poet, to Malory, Spenser, Shakespeare, and beyond. If desire is creative in a real way, in producing multiplicity—as Deleuze and Guattari argue—then the legacy of this literary green world retains potential for grounding new forms of ecological cultural productivity. It does so in a multilayered earth, combining elements of both the rhizomic and the arborescent (the root and the tree of Western tradition, as it were), as in Eriugena's earthly yet otherworldly Tree of Life, "the environment and the place of all goodness and all good." Culturally specific Western readings of metonymy, as desire that is lack, change when reading the contingency of nonbeing as rich and fertile in dynamic relation to being. The "place-between" in apophatic aesthetics, a noncapitalist environmental asceticism, becomes potentially a creative metonym for empathetic engagement. Frye described the "rhythmic movement from normal world to green world and back again" that "makes each world seem unreal when seen by the light of the other."⁹⁸ The significant distinction for early Insular Otherworld narratives, given their direct overlay of topographically real and spiritual landscape, remains. The rhythmic back-and-forth movement makes each world seem *real* by light of the other in the sense of realization of the place-between, the ecology subverting objectification of each.

The Otherworld trope of the old Irish Sea province enjoyed an afterlife in the literary Green World because its overriding of Western binaries of inside-outside and body-idea fulfilled an environmental need of humans as ecological beings. Embodied in landscape metonymy that engages subject and object together in a productively real performative fantasy of empathy, such environmental imagination articulates ecology. It does so in a geography of desire that puts an ultimately beyond-human face on nature in relationship with the human through bodily, inter-subjective language. Evoking a participatory ethic of environmental responsibility to the other, an ecological asceticism beyond the polarity of self-interest and altruism, the trope reimagines fluid boundaries beyond categories of human and natural. And it does so in ways still creatively generative of the real.

NOTES

1 Archipelago and Otherworld

1. John Carey, *A Single Ray of the Sun, Religious Speculation in Early Ireland* (Andover, MA, and Aberystwyth, UK: Celtic Studies Publications, 1999), p. 29; and "On the Interrelationships of Some *Cín Dromma Snechtai* Texts," *Ériu* 46 (1995): 71–92. Of monastic provenance though concerned with Otherworld themes, some of the book's texts may have dated to the seventh century, according to Carey.
2. The term Otherworld in Insular narratives, named often interchangeably the Irish or Celtic Otherworld, is a label created by modern scholarship. For debate over the meaningfulness of the modern term, see Patrick Sims-Williams, "Some Celtic Otherworld Terms," in *Celtic Language, Celtic Culture, A Festschrift for Eric P. Hamp*, ed. A.T.E. Matonis and Daniel F. Melia (Belmont, MA: Ford & Bailie, 1990), pp. 57–81; and John Carey, "The Irish 'Otherworld': Hiberno-Latin Perspectives," *Éigse* 25 (1991): 154–59.
3. Séamus Mac Mathúna, ed., *Immram Brain, Bran's Journey to the Land of the Women: An Edition of the Old Irish Tale with Linguistic Analysis, Notes and Commentary* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1985), pp. 39–40. The English version is mine, relying heavily on Kuno Meyer, ed. and trans., *The Voyage of Bran Son of Febal to the Land of the Living*, vol. 1 (1895, repr. New York: AMS, 1972), pp. 16–22; § 33–38, 40–44, and on Mac Mathúna. I have followed modern Irish convention in using an "h" following letters that have a punctum delens over them in the original text, here and in other Irish texts that follow throughout this study.
4. See Edward S. Casey's explication of Luce Irigaray's work in *The Fate of Place, A Philosophical History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), pp. 321–30.
5. John Carey, *Ireland and the Grail* (Aberystwyth, UK: Celtic Studies Publications, 2007), pp. 60–65; another text, *Immacaldam in Druad Brain 7 inna Banfhátho Febuil ós Loch Fhebuil*, is important to this connection as made by Carey.
6. On multifarious in early Irish literature, see Edgar Slotkin, "Medieval Irish Scribes and Fixed Texts," *Éigse* 17 (1977–79): 437–50; and also Hildegard Tristram's work on *Táin Bó Cúailnge*, including "The Cattle-Raid of Cuailnge between the Oral and the Written. A Research Report (SFB 321, Project A 5, 1986–1996)," *Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie* 51 (1999): 125–29.
7. James Carney, "The Earliest Bran Material," in *Latin Script and Latin Letters, A.D. 400–900: Festschrift Presented to Ludwig Bieler*, ed. John J. O'Meara and Bernd Naumann (Leiden, NL: E.J. Brill, 1976), pp. 174–93; Proinsias Mac Cana, "The sinless Otherworld of *Immram Brain*," *Ériu* 27 (1976): 95–115; and Mac Cana, "On the 'prehistory' of *Immram Brain*," *Ériu* 26 (1975): 33–52. See also John Carey, "The Lough Foyle Colloquy Texts: *Immacaldam Choluim Chille 7 ind Ódaig oc Carraic*

Eolairg and Immacaldam in Druad Brain 7 inna Banfhátho Febuil ós Loch Fhebuil,” *Ériu* 52 (2002): 53–87; and “On the Interrelationships of Some *Cín Dromma Snechtai* Texts,” *Ériu* 46 (1995): 71–92.

8. The term *Celtic* (pronounced by scholars “Keltic”) is a modern label of academic origin, based on Classical Greek and Latin terminology. It is a useful shorthand for cultures of the Irish Sea zone and Brittany with linguistic origins in the most recent survivors of the Celtic language family (including in modern times the related languages of Irish, Scots Gaelic, and Manx, along with Cornish, Welsh, and Breton, the latter three having developed together from early British-Celtic). Patrick Sims-Williams qualifies the term in “Celtomania and Celtskepticism,” *Cambrian Medieval Celtic Studies* 36 (Winter 1998): 1–36.
9. John Carey argues that original core Irish narratives of Bran probably were a source for the grail legends. Carey, *Ireland and the Grail*, pp. 60–65.
10. On this celebration of island monasticism in the *Navigatio S. Brendani* in an Irish Sea context, see Jonathan M. Wooding, “Island and Coastal Churches in Medieval Wales and Ireland,” in *Ireland and Wales in the Middle Ages*, ed. Karen Jankulak and Jonathan M. Wooding (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2007), pp. 220–22 [201–28]. On issues regarding genre, see David N. Dumville, “*Echtrae* and *immram*: some problems of definition,” *Ériu* 27 (1976): 73–94. The use of *fairci* in the *Immram Brain* poem quoted here, from Mac Mathúna’s edition, a genitive form of a term meaning expanse as in sea, also is at least in retrospect suggestive of the Middle Irish term *fairche*, related to *parúchia*, meaning monastic territory.
11. See chapters three and four in this volume.
12. For a survey of the distinctive involvement of animals in Irish and Welsh hagiographic traditions in relation to forest motifs, e.g., see Susan Power Bratton, “Oaks, Wolves and Love: Celtic Monks and Northern Forests,” *Journal of Forest History* 3 (1989): 4–20; and Mary Donatus, *Beasts and Birds in the Lives of the Early Irish Saints*, PhD dissertation (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1934).
13. Benjamin Hudson, “Time is Short,” in *Irish Sea Studies 900–1200* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2006), p. 173 [172–96].
14. John Carey, “Tara and the Supernatural,” in *The Kingship and Landscape of Tara*, ed. Edel Bhreathnach (Dublin: Four Courts Press for The Discovery Programme, 2005), pp. 32–48; p. 48, note 90.
15. Robin Stacey Chapman, *The Road to Judgment: From Custom to Court in Medieval Ireland and Wales* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994), pp. 200 and 216.
16. Marie-Louise Sjoestedt, *Celtic Gods and Heroes*, trans. Myles Dillon (New York: Turtle Island Foundation, 1982), p. 1.
17. On nature as fact and nature as value in current medieval studies, see Barbara A. Hanawalt and Lisa J. Kiser, “Introduction,” in *Engaging with Nature: Essays on the Natural World in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, ed. Barbara A. Hanawalt and Lisa J. Kiser (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame University, 2008), pp. 3–4 [1–10].
18. In this I follow somewhat the argument by Derek Pearsall and Elizabeth Salter, *Landscapes and Seasons of the Medieval World* (London: Elek, 1973), for a medieval semiotics of landscape as iconographic. Pearsall and Salter’s seminal work on early European literary landscape has been joined by notable studies such as the following: Gillian R. Overing and Marijane Osborne, *Landscape of Desire* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1994); Sylvia Tomasch and Sealy Gilles, eds., *Text and Territory: Geographical Imagination in the European*

- Middle Ages* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998); Barbara A. Hanawalt and Michael Kobialka, *Medieval Practices of Space*, *Medieval Cultures* 23 (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minneapolis Press, 2000); Nicholas Howe and Michael Wolfe, eds., *Inventing Medieval Landscapes* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2002); and Clare A. Lees and Gillian Overing, eds., *A Place to Believe In: Locating Medieval Landscapes* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006). Environmental literary studies or “ecocriticism” seeks to highlight attitudes toward the physical environment in literary texts, in order to analyze implicit cultural attitudes toward nature and related issues of ethnicity and power. See William Rueckert, “Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Ecocriticism,” in *The Ecocriticism Reader*, ed. Cheryll Glotfelty and Harold Fromm (Athens GA, 1996), pp. 105–23. Glotfelty is a founding figure in the movement and of its central journal *ISLE: Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment*. Lawrence Buell developed criteria for environmentally oriented (or “ecocentric”) texts in his *The Environmental Imagination: Thoreau, Nature Writing, and the Formation of American Culture* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), pp. 6–8. See also Buell, *The Future of Environmental Criticism, Environmental Crisis and Literary Imagination*, Blackwell Manifestos (Malden, MA and Oxford: Routledge, 2005); and Glen A. Love, *Practical Ecocriticism: Literature, Biology, and the Environment* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2003), p. 1.
19. On exoticization of the Celtic, see Terence Brown, ed., *Celticism*, *Studia Imagologica* 8 (Amsterdam: Editions Rodopi, 1996).
 20. See, e.g., environmental phenomenologist Ted Toadvine’s “Culture and Cultivation: Prolegomena to a Philosophy of Agriculture,” in *Nature’s Edge: Boundary Explorations in Ecological Theory and Practice*, *Environmental Philosophy and Ethics*, ed. Charles S. Brown and Ted Toadvine (Albany: SUNY Press, 2007), pp. 207–22; see also Bruce V. Foltz and Robert Frodeman, eds., *Essays in Environmental Philosophy*, *Studies in Continental Thought* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2004); and Bruce V. Foltz, *Inhabiting the Earth: Heidegger, Environmental Ethics, and the Metaphysics of Nature* (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 1995). For Heidegger’s own related work, see Martin Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, trans. Gregory Fried and Richard Polt (New Haven, CN: Yale University, 2000); and “The Thing,” in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. Albert Hofstadter (New York: Harper Perennial, 2001), pp. 163–80; also Edward S. Casey’s helpful discussion of Heidegger’s work in relation to place, *The Fate of Place*, pp. 243–84; Jeff Malpas, *Heidegger’s Topology: Being, Place, World* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2006); and Graham Harman, *Heidegger Explained: from Phenomenon to Thing*, *Ideas Explained* 4 (Chicago and LaSalle, IL: Open Court, 2007), especially helpful on Heidegger’s often glossed-over notion of the fourfold, pp. 131–35.
 21. Edward S. Casey, “Taking a Glance at the Environment, Preliminary Thoughts on a Promising Topic,” in *Eco-Phenomenology, Back to the Earth Itself*, *Environmental Philosophy and Ethics*, ed. Charles S. Brown and Ted Toadvine (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2003), p. 195 [187–210].
 22. Eriugena’s major work is *The Periphyseon*. See I.P. Sheldon-Williams with John J. O’Meara, trans. *Periphyseon (The Division of Nature)*, *Cahiers d’études médiévales, Cahier spécial* 3 (Montreal: Éditions Bellarmin, and Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks, 1987). Major editions of *The Periphyseon* include I.P. Sheldon-Williams and Ludwig Bieler, eds. and trans., *Books 1–3, Scriptores Latini Hiberniae (SLH)* 7, 9, 11; Édouard Jeuneau, ed., and J. J. O’Meara and I.P. Sheldon-Williams, trans.,

- Book 4, *SLH* 13 (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1968–81 and 1995); and Édouard Jeuneau, ed., *Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis* 161–5, 5 vols (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 1996–2003). References to the Latin transcript of Eriugena's work in Migne's *Patrologia Latina* (PL) throughout are to volume 122. Myra L. Uhlfelder, trans., with Jean A. Potter, ed., *Periphyseon, On the Division of Nature*, Library of the Liberal Arts (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1976), offers a helpful partial English translation with interpolated summary.
23. A term used by linguist Noam Chomsky (*Aspects of the Theory of Syntax* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1965) to describe syntactical structure below phrase-making. Following the anthropological theories of Clifford Geertz [*The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973)], cultures, like languages, have a deep coded pattern of values. Here the idea of a formative or "deep structure" of culture is used in relation to landscape in a way reflective also of the sociological notion of *habitus* developed by Pierre Bourdieu in studies of symbolic power [*Outline of a Theory of Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977)], but in the context of environmental literary studies and ecosemiotics [Winfried Nöth, "Ecosemiotics," *Sign Systems Studies* 26 (1998): 332–43]. Thanks to my former students Nick Kupensky and A. Joseph McMullen for suggesting the ecosemiotic connection.
 24. Wooding, "Island and Coastal Churches in Medieval Wales and Ireland," pp. 201–202.
 25. John Carey, "The Nature of Miracles in Early Irish Saints' Lives," in *Reimagining Nature: Premodern and Postmodern Confluences*, ed. Alfred K. Siewers (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, forthcoming). For an example of a cultural history of desert monasticism examining larger connecting themes crossing regions, see Douglas Burton-Christie, *The Word in the Desert: Scripture and the Quest for Holiness in Early Christian Monasticism* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993).
 26. See Thomas O'Loughlin, *Celtic Theology: Humanity, World and God in Early Irish Writings* (London: Continuum, 2000); and *Journeys on the Edges: The Celtic Tradition*, Traditions of Christian Spirituality (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2000).
 27. On Brittany, see Nora K. Chadwick, *Early Brittany* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1969); and Julia M.H. Smith, *Province and Empire: Brittany and the Carolingians*, Cambridge Studies in Medieval Life and Thought (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).
 28. Evidence includes archaeological suggestions of continued trade between the Irish Sea and the Eastern Mediterranean into the sixth century, Irish references to Cassian and apparent influence of his writings or similar models of spiritual practice, an account of visiting Egyptian and Armenian monks in Ireland, a seeming Syriac monastic model for an early community in Brittany, theories of relation of the so-called Celtic cross design to possible Coptic models, and the popular Ionan motif of the meeting of the desert hermits Antony and Paul. Parallel traditions included an emphasis on the influence of ascetic elders who apparently supplied the remarkable array of local Celtic saints purported to date from the fifth and sixth centuries. For a recent pamphlet-style but helpful compilation of evidence circumstantial and otherwise, see Gregory Telepneff, *The Egyptian Desert in the Irish Bogs: The Byzantine Character of Early Celtic Monasticism*, second edn (Etna, CA: Center for Traditionalist Orthodox Studies, 2001).
 29. Adomnán, *Vita S. Columbae* 1.20, ed. A.O. Anderson and M.O. Anderson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), p. 46. Wooding, "Island and Coastal Churches in Medieval Wales and Ireland," p. 221.

30. For Augustinus Hibernicus, see his *De Mirabilibus sacrae Scripturae*, PL 35, 2149–202, and Francis MacGinty, trans., “The Treatise *De Mirabilibus Sacrae Scripturae*: Critical Edition, with Introduction, English Translation of the Long Recension and Some Notes,” unpublished doctoral thesis (University College Dublin, 1971). Portions are translated by John Carey in *King of Mysteries: Early Irish Religious Writings* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2000)). See especially III.9–10, MacGinty, p. 168, and discussion in Carey, *A Single Ray of the Sun*, pp. 50–51. For Eriugena’s declaration of all miracles as natural (following the Irish tradition of his predecessor Augustinus Hibernicus), see *Periphyseon* V.24, PL 901C, in which he says “there has never been any miracle in the world which is contrary to the nature of God,” the nature of God being included in his use of the term Nature at large (trans. Sheldon-Williams with O’Meara, p. 574). Uhlfelder translates this phrase less literally yet more akin to his overall meaning as “God has produced no miracle in the world contrary to nature” (*Periphyseon, on the Division of Nature*, p. 306). On Augustine of Hippo’s view of miracles as natural, see Augustine, *De civitate Dei* 21.8.
31. Robert Bartlett, *The Natural and the Supernatural in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), pp. 16–17. Eriugena is a rare early medieval Latin author cited by Bartlett for using terms meaning “supernatural,” but did so in translating Greek apophatic concepts of the divine essence as unspeakably “beyond-natural” in a different context from later Scholastic uses of such terms.
32. John Cassian’s portrayal in his Thirteenth Conference of a desert father’s implicit criticism of Augustine’s emphases on grace and Original Sin was, if not a source for early Celtic literary culture, a parallel expression of prevalent ascetic emphasis. An early Irish elegy to St. Columba suggests the importance of Cassian’s writings to that seminal figure in the Irish church; likewise echoes of Cassian’s thought are found in the seminal Celtic penitential attributed to Uinniau; see Michael W. Herren and Shirley Ann Brown, *Christ in Celtic Christianity: Britain and Ireland from the Fifth to the Tenth Century*, Studies in Celtic History 20 (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell Press, 2002), pp. 117, 124. While Stephen Mercer Lake in *The Influence of John Cassian on Early Continental and Insular Monasticism to c. A.D. 817*, PhD dissertation (Cambridge University, 1996) is skeptical of Cassian’s direct influence on Western monasticism, he notes apparent affinities of Irish monasticism with the Egyptian monasticism that Cassian promoted, p. 218. Such affinities lie in part behind Michael Richter’s statement that the Irish tendency to honor the concept of the “naturally good” and pagan ancestral tradition was probably well-established “considerably earlier” than the seventh century. “If the Irish Christian Teachers had had a Choice between Augustine and Others, They Chose the Others,” *Ireland and her Neighbours in the Seventh Century* (New York and Houndmills, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 1999), p. 37.
33. Benjamin Hudson, “The Changing Economy of the Irish Sea Province: AD 900–1300,” in *Irish Sea Studies*, pp. 21–46.
34. On the distinctive cultural continuities of sub-Roman and post-Roman western Britain (from whence Ireland was Christianized), see Ken Dark, *Britain and the End of the Roman Empire* (Stroud, UK: Tempus, 2000), p. 230; and Christopher A. Snyder, *An Age of Tyrants, Britain and the Britons, AD 400–600* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998), p. 251; also Alfred K. Siewers, “Gildas and Glastonbury,” in *Via Crucis: Essays on Sources and Ideas in Memory of J.E. Cross*, ed. Thomas Hall (Morgantown, WV: West Virginia University Press, 2002), pp. 423–32. Many commentators, most recently Michael Herren and Shirley

- Anne Brown in *Christ in Celtic Christianity*, have sought to define a continuing Pelagian strain in early Irish and Welsh Christianity, although Cassianic better suggests its relative orthodoxy. This relates to the wide range of patristic sources for early Irish literary culture, apparently more extensive than that evidenced in the Anglo-Saxon corpus. See Peter Jeffery, "Eastern and Western Elements in the Irish Monastic Prayer of the Hours," in *The Divine Office in the Latin Middle Ages: Methodology and Source Studies, Regional Developments, Hagiography*, ed. Margot E. Fassler and Rebecca A. Baltzer (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 100 [99–143]. See also Thomas N. Hall, *Apocryphal Lore and the Life of Christ in Old English Literature*, PhD dissertation (University of Illinois at Urbana, 1990), p. 5; and Charles D. Wright, *The Irish Tradition in Old English Literature*, Cambridge Studies in Anglo-Saxon England 6 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).
35. T.M. Charles-Edwards, "Introduction: Prehistoric and early Ireland," in Dáibhí Ó Cróinín, ed., *A New History of Ireland I, Prehistoric and Early Ireland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), lvii–lxxxii, at lxxii. See also chapter six of this work.
 36. On the "mandarin class," see Donnchadh Ó Corráin, "Nationality and Kingship in Pre-Norman Ireland," in *Nationality and the Pursuit of National Independence*, ed. T.W. Moody (Belfast: Appletree Press, 1978), p. 19 [1–35].
 37. Donnchadh Ó Corráin, "Ireland c. 800: Aspects of Society," in *A New History of Ireland I, Prehistoric and Early Ireland*, ed. Dáibhí Ó Cróinín (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 549–50 [549–608].
 38. Laura L. Howes references writings on the modern meanings of place and space in discussing late medieval landscape narrative, in her "Introduction," in *Place, Space, and Landscape in Medieval Narrative*, Tennessee Studies in Literature 43, ed. Howes (Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 2007), p. viii [vii–xiv].
 39. Ó Corráin, "Ireland c. 800: Aspects of Society," p. 600. For population estimate see p. 580, and for number of churches, see p. 597; the attempt at a per capita estimate is mine.
 40. Benjamin Hudson, "Gaelic princes and Gregorian reform," in *Irish Sea Studies*, p. 225 [212–229].
 41. The Carolingians generally seem to have found Anglo-Saxon monastic models most compatible with their developing view of a more centralized monarchy. James Russell, *The Germanization of Early Medieval Christianity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), pp. 164–65; also Albrecht Diem, "Monks, Kings and the Transformation of Sanctity: Jonas of Bobbio and the End of the Holy Man," *Speculum* 82:3 (2007): 521–59; and David Harry Miller, "Sacral Kingship, Biblical Kingship," in *Religion, Culture, and Society in the Early Middle Ages, Studies in Honor of Richard E. Sullivan*, Studies in Medieval Culture 23, ed. Thomas F.X. Noble and John J. Contreni (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, Western Michigan University, 1987) pp. 136–37 [131–54].
 42. Athanasius, *The Life of Antony*, trans. Robert C. Gregg (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 2006), pp. 46–47, 48.
 43. *Ibid.*, p. 74.
 44. Anonymous, "The Scribe Out of Doors," p. 39, in Rudolf Thurneysen, *Old Irish Reader*, trans. D.A. Binchy and Osborn Bergin (Dublin: Dublin Institute, 1981), p. 39.
 45. Oliver Davies, ed. and trans., *Celtic Spirituality*, Classics of Western Spirituality (New York: Paulist Press, 1999), pp. 259–60.

46. I am indebted to John Grim for suggesting this term to me.
47. Bruce Martin, "Lord of Lark and Lightning: Reassessing Celtic Christianity's Ecological Emphases," *Journal of Religion and Society* 6 (2004), at <http://moses.creighton.edu/jrs/2004/2004-11.html> [accessed May 10, 2008]. See also Donnchaid Ó Corráin, "Early Irish hermit poetry?" in *Sages, Saints and Storytellers: Celtic Studies in Honour of Professor James Carney*, Maynooth monographs 2, ed. Liam Breatnach and Kim McCone (Maynooth, IR: An Sagart, 1989), pp. 251–67; and Patrick Ford, "Blackbirds, Cuckoos, and Infixed Pronouns," in *Celtic Connections: Proceedings of the 10th International Congress of Celtic Studies*, vol. 1, ed. Ronald Black, William Gillies and Roibeard Ó Maolaláigh (East Linton, UK: Tuckwell Press, 1999), pp. 162–70.
48. Irish text from Carey, *King of Mysteries*, pp. 131–32, 134; for English translations, see Oliver Davies, ed. and trans., *Celtic Spirituality*, pp. 118–20; Carey, *King of Mysteries*, pp. 132, 134; and Whitley Stokes and John Strachan, eds., *Thesaurus Palaeohibernicus* vol. 2 (repr. Dublin: Dublin Institute, 1975), p. 355–57.
49. Carey, *King of Mysteries*, p. 130.
50. Geoffrey of Clairvaux, *Vita Prima, Bernard of Clairvaux*, 3, chap. 2, in *Acta Sanctorum*, August 4, 297C–D (Antwerp and Brussels: Société des Bollandistes, 1643–1940). The environmental view of the present study differs somewhat from Joel Kaye's celebration of the paradigm shift in this era as a prelude to modern science, while it accepts that connection. Joel Kaye, "The (Re)Balance of Nature, ca. 1250–1450," in *Engaging with Nature: Essays on the Natural World in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, ed. Barbara A. Hanawalt and Lisa J. Kiser (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame University, 2008), p. 105 [85–113].
51. For a comparison of accounts of Franciscan and Celtic encounters with the natural world, see Bratton, "Oaks, Wolves and Love." As medievalist John M. Ganim observes, following the literary scholar Chris Fitter, in the later medieval period there emerged "a virtual urbanization of the countryside itself" ("Landscape and Late Medieval Literature," in *Place, Space, and Landscape in Medieval Narrative*, Tennessee Studies in Literature 43, ed. Laura L. Howes (Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 2007), p. xviii [xv–xxix]).
52. Jo Ann McNamara, "City Air Makes Men Free and Women Bound," in *Text and Territory: Geographical Imagination in the European Middle Ages*, ed. Tomasch and Gilles, p. 156 [143–58]: "In the early Middle Ages, before urbanization, powerful and active females were often gendered as manly, the sexually inactive monastic population was grouped in a porous middle . . . in the medieval city, the unwomanly female was cloistered out of sight," as "the universities produced new generations of ungendered men who gained a monopoly of the legislating order." On Irigaray's views of sexual difference and place, see again Casey, *The Fate of Place*, pp. 321–30.
53. Suzanne Conklin Akbari, *Optical Theory and Medieval Allegory* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), p. 43.
54. On the six points following, see Caitlin Corning, *The Celtic and Roman Traditions: Conflict and Consensus in the Early Medieval Church* (New York and Houndmills, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006): abbots and synods, see following note here; holy exiles and frequent private confession, pp. 176–77 and 44; rural orientation, p. 48; non-clerical management, p. 100; Antiochene exegesis, p. 106. On biblical models for foundational Insular writing styles in Latin, see the works of David R. Howlett, including *The Celtic Latin Tradition of Biblical Style* (Dublin: Four Courts

- Press, 1995). On the enumerative style and other aspects of early Irish writing and tradition, see Wright, *The Irish Tradition in Old English Literature*. On biblical writing as a model for a particular style involving the play of mystery on the surface of narrative, see Eric Auerbach's discussion of Odysseus' scar and the story of Abraham and Isaac in the beginning of his *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*, trans. Willard R. Trask (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003).
55. Corning, *The Celtic and Roman Traditions*, p. 110, also 94 and 102; on fragmentary Welsh evidence, see p. 167. Corning sees the latter as indicating a lack of significant parallels, although I reach the opposite conclusion based on issues discussed throughout this study related both to narratives and asceticism. Sarah Foot's recent study, *Monastic Life in Anglo-Saxon England, c. 600–900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), also offers a valuable look at contemporary parallels to Irish monastic networks in the Anglo-Saxon realms, including a lack of regularizing of monasteries and their definition, especially before the tenth century. However, she notes both distinctive close connections with Germanic aristocratic society and increasing episcopal control in Anglo-Saxon monasteries from the late seventh through the eighth centuries. Corning highlighted current issues in the area of comparative Insular monastic studies in *The Medieval Review*; accessed via email subscription [July 7, 2007], archives available at <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/t/tmr/>. For Bede's account of native British–Celtic bishops seeking counsel from a hermit, see *Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum* 2.2; *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, rev. edn, trans. Leo Sherley-Price (London: Penguin, 1990), pp. 104–107.
 56. Russell, *The Germanization of Early Medieval Christianity*, pp. 164–65. Later medieval Irish monastic communities in Germany sometimes were founded in existing “urban” centers, but the tendency of monastic communities in Ireland to develop larger surrounding communities is sometimes termed proto-urban.
 57. Hildegard L.C. Tristram, in the introduction to *The Legend of Mary of Egypt in Medieval Insular Hagiography*, ed. Erich Poppe and Bianca Ross (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1996), pp. 1–17, points up how vernacular Anglo-Saxon texts show a “predilection for the Alexandrian mode of exegesis,” typology and allegory, while Irish exegetical writings “tend to follow the Antiochene mode of expounding texts... which led to the well-known Irish feature of (exegetical) *curiositas* and to the development of a vivid imagination,” a combination of literalism and verbal ornamentation “that is the hallmark of mediaeval Irish vernacular writing,” while early English writing is more controlling in style (p. 12). Augustine's famous exegesis of Genesis, often assumed to be literal from its title, involves a fairly metaphorical and allegorical approach by contrast with the works of St. Basil and some early Irish texts. See Thomas Finan, “St. Augustine on the ‘mira profunditas’ of Scripture,” in *Scriptural Interpretation in the Fathers: Letter and Spirit*, ed. Finan and Vincent Twomey (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1995), pp. 163–99 at 194.
 58. See T.M. Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland*, *The Cambridge History of Ireland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 464–65; on the Finn tales and their backgrounds, see also Joseph Falaky Nagy, *The Wisdom of the Outlaw: The Boyhood Deeds of Finn in Gaelic Narrative Tradition* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985); and Michael J. Enright, *Lady With a Mead Cup: Ritual Prophecy and Lordship in the European Warband from La Tene to the Viking Age* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1995).
 59. Thomas O'Loughlin, “Living in the Ocean,” in *Studies in the Cult of Columba*, ed. Cormac Bourke (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1997), pp. 11–23; Deirdre

- O'Sullivan, "Space, Silence and Shortage on Lindisfarne: The Archaeology of Asceticism," in *Image and Power in the Archaeology of Early Medieval Britain: Essays in Honour of Rosemary Cramp*, ed. Helena Hamerow and Arthur MacGregor (Oxford: Oxford Books, 2001), pp. 33–52; cited also in Antonio Sennis, "Narrating Places: Narrative and Space in Medieval Monasteries," in *People and Space in the Middle Ages, 300–1300*, Studies in the Early Middle Ages 15, ed. Wendy Davies, Guy Halsall, and Andrew Reynolds (Turnhout, Bel.: Brepols, 2006), p. 293 [275–294]. O'Sullivan notes that "the procession, the act itself, was what defined the boundary, and not the other way around" (p. 40). She makes a similar point regarding book production as a performative act of mutual reciprocity with spatiality. For a short but helpful summary of early Irish monastic practices, see Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland*, pp. 380–82.
60. On theological "energy theory" in Christian tradition, see Duncan Reid, *Energies of the Spirit: Trinitarian Models in Eastern Orthodox and Western Theology* (Atlanta, GA: American Academy of Religion, 1997).
 61. Hesychastic practice involves a continual repetition of prayer (usually involving Jesus' name in the form of the Jesus Prayer), often in rhythm with breathing and heartbeat and certain bodily postures, with the goal of bringing the mind into the heart. It traces back at least to Evagrius Ponticus, a source for Cassian, in the fourth century; see Elizabeth A. Clark, *The Origenist Controversy, The Cultural Construction of an Early Christian Debate* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992), p. 69.
 62. Dumitru Staniloae, *Orthodox Spirituality, A Practical Guide for the Faithful and a Definitive Manual for the Scholar*, trans. Jerome Newville and Otilia Kloos (South Canaan, PA: St. Tikhon Seminary Press, 2003), p. 209. See also St. Basil of Caesarea, in chapter nine of *On the Holy Spirit: Basile de Césarée: Traité du Saint-Esprit*, Sources chrétiennes 17, ed. Benoit Pruche (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1947), pp. 326–28; trans. Nonna Verna Harrison in *On the Human Condition*, Popular Patristics Series (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2005), pp. 42–44.
 63. Colmán Etchingham, *Church Organisation in Ireland AD 650 to 1000* (Maynooth: Laigin Publications, 1999), pp. 329–30.
 64. Fergus Kelly, *Early Irish Farming: A Study Based Mainly on the Law-Texts of the 7th and 8th Centuries AD*, Early Irish Law Series IV (Dublin: Dublin Institute, 1997), p. 425.
 65. Bede, *Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum* 2.2; *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, trans. Leo Sherley-Price, pp. 104–107. Gerald of Wales, *Descriptio Cambriae* 1; *The Journey through Wales and the Description of Wales*, trans. Lewis Thorpe (Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin, 1978), p. 254.
 66. See, e.g., Thomas Owen Clancy and Gilbert Márkus, *Iona: The Earliest Poetry of a Celtic Monastery* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1995); and Uinseann Ó Maidín, trans. and ed., *The Celtic Monk: Rules and Writings of Early Irish Monks*, Cistercian Studies Series 162 (Kalamazoo, MI, and Spencer, MA: Cistercian Studies Publications, 1996).
 67. Adomnán, *Vita S. Columbae*, I.43, p. 78.
 68. Archimandrite Sophrony (Sakharov), *St. Silouan the Athonite*, trans. Rosemary Edmonds (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1999), pp. 46–49.
 69. Letter by Dostoevsky, quoted by Richard Pevear in his "Foreword" to Fyodor Dostoevsky, *Demons*, trans. Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky (New York: Vintage, 1995), p. xx [vii–xxiii].
 70. *Ibid.*, p. xx.

71. Whitley Stokes and John Strachan, eds., *Thesaurus Palaeohibernicus* vol. 2 (repr. Dublin: Dublin Institute, 1975), p. 164; Carey discusses an analogue between this and the early Irish Otherworld text *Echtrae Chonlai* in *A Single Ray of the Sun*, pp. 32–33.
72. A good introduction to these patristic layers of time, discussed further in the next chapter, can be found in Georgios I. Mantzaridis, *Time and Man*, trans. Julian Vulliamy (South Canaan, Pa.: St. Tikhon's Seminary, 1996); and in John Romanides, *Patristic Theology: The University Lectures of Fr. John Romanides*, trans. Alexios Trader (Thessaloniki, Greece: Uncut Mountain Press, 2007), pp. 274–75.
73. See Patricia Rumsey, *Sacred Time in Early Christian Ireland: The Monks of the Navigatio and the Céili Dé in Dialogue to Explore the Theologies of Time and the Liturgy of the Hours in Pre-Viking Ireland* (New York: T&T Clark Theology, 2007). While Rumsey's work bases its attempted contrast of the Céili Dé with other monastic elements in Ireland on somewhat limited evidence, its analysis of the *Navigatio sancti Brendani abbatis* offers insight into a perceived relation of natural and liturgical time, and illustrates efforts to redeem time through liturgical and prayer practices in early medieval Ireland.
74. Mantzaridis, *Time and Man*, p. 80.
75. See especially Book Two of *The Periphyseon*.
76. For a helpful discussion of complexities involved in relating indigenous traditions to conservation, see Jeffrey G. Snodgrass and Kristina Tiedje, "Guest editors' Introduction: Indigenous Nature Reverence and Conservation—Seven Ways of Transcending an Unnecessary Dichotomy," *Journal for the Study of Religion, Nature and Culture* 2.1 (2008): 6–29.
77. Suzanne Conklin Akbari, *Seeing through the Veil: Optical Theory and Medieval Allegory* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 2004), p. 5.
78. On nonbeing and being as both part of nature in Eriugena's philosophy, see his *Periphyseon*, 1.1, PL 441A, trans. I.P. Sheldon-Williams and O'Meara, p. 25.
79. For Augustine's developing views on evil, evident in *De Libero Arbitrio* and *De Natura et Gratia* among other works, see G.R. Evans, "Evil," in *Augustine through the Ages, an Encyclopedia*, ed. Allan D. Fitzgerald (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999), pp. 340–44. For Eriugena's evolving association of nonbeing with God, see Dermot Moran, *The Philosophy of John Scottus Eriugena, A Study of Idealism in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), especially pp. 215–16. Even in Eriugena's earliest known writing, on predestination, which is more accepting of the Augustinian view of nonbeing despite Eriugena's anti-predestination views, his embrace of free will includes a definition of ex nihilo nature that is fundamentally non-Augustinian in orientation, and for that matter non-Thomist, as Moran's study suggests (p. 215).
80. For her discussion of the significance in Western cultural semiotics of the addition of the *filioque* to the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed, see Julia Kristeva, "Dostoevsky, the Writing of Suffering, and Forgiveness," in *Black Sun, Depression and Melancholia*, trans. Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989), pp. 175–217.
81. *Ibid.*, pp. 209–10.
82. Nöth, "Ecosemiotics."
83. For both Eriugena and Maximus, the *per filio* formula [of the Holy Spirit proceeding from the Father *through* (*per*) the son] was an acceptable reading of the *filioque*. But as the *filioque* became dogma throughout the Western church from about the

- tenth century onward, Trinitarian theology underwent the systematic change described by Kristeva. In early Ireland, the *Liber de Ordine Creaturarum* from the seventh century contains the *filioque*, although in the context of cosmology emphasizing the renewal of the world that seems more akin to Maximian-Eriugenian ideas than Augustinian; likewise the peculiar wording of the Trinitarian formula in verse attributed to the ninth-century Irish poet Blathmac mac Con Bretan, while translated by James Carney in the sense of the *filioque*, seems to reflect a dynamic *per filio* sense of the Holy Spirit: "The Holy Spirit ministers from [or perhaps 'goes back and forth from'] Them [the Father and the Son] with the permission of all," the key word as Carney noted being the verb *do-imthiret* (pp. 66–67), which he called "strange" because it is "a verb of motion" related to *timthirecht*, "act of going to and fro." See *The Poems of Blathmac Son of Cú Brettan together with the Irish Gospel of Thomas and a Poem on the Virgin Mary*, Irish Texts Society 47 (Dublin: Irish Texts Society, 1964), pp. 66–67 and note on line 788, p. 146.
84. Attributed to Theosterictus the Monk in the ninth century CE; from the Paraklesis service to the Theotokos (*The Service of the Small Paraklesis (Intercessory Prayer) to the Most Holy Theotokos*, trans. Demetri Kangelaris and Nicholas Kasemotes, rev. edn (Brookline, MA: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 1997), p. 17.
 85. Kristeva, "Dostoevsky, the Writing of Suffering, and Forgiveness," p. 211; emphasis in the original. Kristeva's use of the terms identity and difference here appear to echo Deleuze's view of a dynamic experience of identity that is the effect of difference [see his "Bergson's Conception of Difference," in *The New Bergson*, ed. J. Mullarkey (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2000), pp. 42–65], related also to how Martin Heidegger and Edward S. Casey see place as the experience of difference.
 86. Evan Thompson, *Mind in Life: Biology, Phenomenology, and the Sciences of Mind* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap–Harvard University Press, 2007).
 87. Kristeva in exploring medieval intersubjectivity through formulas of the Trinity adapted the system of Jacques Lacan, with its orders of Real, Imaginary, and Symbolic. Iconographic identification of the semiotic and symbolic in apophatic Trinitarianism arguably would type the Father by the Real, as the essential source-principle of the interpersonal *perichoresis* of the Trinity, but in equalitive interpenetration with unsubordinated hypostases of the Holy Spirit (the Symbolic) and the Son (the Imaginary). That non-Augustinian view of intersubjectivity in effect supports the critique of neo-Freudianism by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, who emphasized desire as a production of the real rather than lack [*Anti-Oedipus, Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, vol. 1, trans. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem, and Helen R. Lane (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1972)]. That emphasis energized the veiled overlay landscape-narrative of nature, and helps explain an empowered deified role for Mary as God-bearer and cocreator and embodiment of earth. This contrasts with the more familiar transcendent later Western Marian discourse of Immaculate Conception, Assumption, and idealized asexuality noted by Kristeva [*In the Beginning was Love: Psychoanalysis and Faith*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987), p. 43]. The result has implications for feminine associations with the Earth [on which see Sherry Ortner, "Is Female to Male as Nature is to Culture?" *Feminist Studies* 1 no. 2 (Autumn 1972): 5–31]. In the non-Augustinian sense, reflected in Eastern Orthodox doctrines of the naturally human origin of Mary and her Dormition rather than Assumption, the body of Mary as Theotokos, associated with the earth in the context of the Eriugenian synthesis, becomes a source of human

- authority analogous to Celtic-style Sovereignty or Byzantine *basileia*. Luce Irigaray parallels this in her explication of the Virgin Mary's fluid cosmic engagement in the Annunciation ["The Way of Breath," in *Between East and West*, European Perspectives, trans. Stephen Pluhacek (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), pp. 73–91].
88. Jorge Luis Borges, "The Gold of the Tigers," quoted in Miranda Green, *Symbol and Image in Celtic Religious Art* (London: Routledge, 1992), p. xii.
 89. Kaye, "The (Re)Balance of Nature, ca. 1250–1350"; Julia Saville, *A Queer Chivalry, The Homoerotic Asceticism of Gerard Manley Hopkins* (Charlottesville, VA: The University Press of Virginia, 2000), p. 27.
 90. See Phillip Cary, *Augustine and the Invention of the Inner Self* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); Andrew Louth, "The Body in Western Catholic Christianity" in *Religion and the Body*, ed. Sarah Coakley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 113–30 at 129; and, again, Kristeva, "Dostoevsky, the Writing of Suffering, and Forgiveness," as well as her discussion of Bernard of Clairvaux and subjectivity in *Tales of Love*, trans. Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987), pp. 151–69.
 91. On this division in the later Middle Ages, see also Erazim Kohák, *The Embers and the Stars: A Philosophical Inquiry into the Moral Sense of Nature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), p. 7.
 92. Andrew Louth, *Greek East and Latin West, The Church AD 681–1071*, The Church in History 3 (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2007), p. 149.
 93. For earlier developments in this process, see Michael Kobialka, "Staging Place/Space in the Eleventh Century, Monastic Practices," in *Medieval Practices of Space*, Medieval Cultures 23, ed. Barbara A. Hanawalt and Michael Kobialka (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minneapolis Press, 2000), pp. 128–48.
 94. Philip Sheldrake, *Spaces for the Sacred: Place, Memory and Identity* (Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press, 2001), pp. 43–44; Catherine Bell, *Ritual Body, Ritual Practice* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992).
 95. Richard C. Hoffmann, "Homo et Natura, Homo in Natura: Ecological Perspectives on the European Middle Ages," in *Engaging with Nature: Essays on the Natural World in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, ed. Barabara A. Hanawalt and Lisa J. Kiser (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame University, 2008), pp. 20, 23–24, 26 [11–38].
 96. Douglas Burton-Christie, "Listening, Reading, Praying: Orality, Literacy and Early Christian Monastic Spirituality," *Anglican Theological Review* (Spring 2001): 220–21 [197–221].
 97. *Táin Bó Cúailnge from the Book of Leinster*, ed. Cecile O'Rahilly (Dublin: Dublin Institute, 1984), 104b, ll. 4919–25; p. 272.
 98. This concession by the conquerors was reportedly a bow to the fertility magic of the Tuatha Dé Danaan, the denizens of the Otherworld given a variety of origins, including apparently that of earlier divinities embodying and typing life in biblical Paradise. Their name originally may have meant "people of the gods," with the possibly tribally derived Danaan name added to distinguish them from descriptions of the children of Israel as "people of God." See John Carey, "The name 'Tuatha Dé Danaan,'" *Éigse* 18 (1981): 291–294. Also see Alwyn Rees and Brinley Rees, *Celtic Heritage: Ancient Tradition in Ireland and Wales*, rev. edn (London: Thames and Hudson, 1989), pp. 38–39. A translation of the relevant passage from *Mesca Ulad* is in John T. Koch, ed., *The Celtic Heroic Age* (Malden, MA: Celtic Studies Publications, 1995), pp. 95–96.

99. See, e.g., John Carey, *Ireland and the Grail*, Celtic Studies Publications 11 (Aberystwyth, UK: Celtic Studies Publications, 2008), pp. 33–34.
100. *Ibid.*, p. 19.
101. Juliette Wood, *The Celts* (New York: Stewart, Tabiri and Chang, 1998), p. 70.
102. John Carey, “The Irish ‘Otherworld’: Hiberno-Latin Perspectives,” *Éigse* 25 (1991): 158 [154–59]. Patrick Sims-Williams notes the possible derivation of the Welsh Otherworld term *Annwfn* from the meaning “Not-World” or “Inner World” (“Some Celtic Otherworld Terms,” p. 62).
103. Carey, “The Irish ‘Otherworld,’” p. 158; “Time, Space, and the Otherworld,” *Proceedings of the Harvard Celtic Colloquium* 17 (1987): 1 [1–42].
104. John Carey, “Otherworlds and Verbal Worlds in Middle Irish Narrative,” *Proceedings of the Harvard Celtic Colloquium* 19 (1989): p. 31 [31–42].
105. Alaric Hall, *Elves in Anglo-Saxon England, Matters of Belief, Health, Gender and Identity*, Anglo-Saxon Studies 8 (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell Press, 2007).
106. Alfred K. Siewers, “Landscapes of Conversion: Guthlac’s Mound and Grendel’s Mere in Expressions of Anglo-Saxon Nation-Building,” in *The Postmodern Beowulf*, ed. Eileen A. Joy and Mary K. Ramsey (Morgantown, WV: West Virginia University Press, 2007), pp. 199–258; Carey, *A Single Ray of the Sun*, p. 19.
107. Richard Sharpe, *Life of St. Columba* (London: Penguin, 1995), preface (n.p.).
108. Jeffrey J. Cohen, *Cultural Diversity in the British Middle Ages: Archipelago, Island, England, The New Middle Ages* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).
109. Jeffrey J. Cohen, *Medieval Identity Machines*, Medieval Cultures (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), p. 13; Gilles Deleuze, “Desert Islands,” in *Desert Islands and Other Texts* (1953–1974), trans. Mike Taormina (Cambridge and London: Semiotext(e), 2004), pp. 9–14.
110. Gearóid Ó Donnchadha, *St. Brendan of Kerry, the Navigator: His Life and Voyages* (Dublin, Open Air: 2004), pp. 8–9.
111. As defined by Dr. Kevin Murray; thanks for his generous personal conversation.
112. *Vita Sancti Columbae* by Adomnán; Adomnan’s *Life of Columba*, rev. edn, Oxford Medieval Texts, ed. A.O. Anderson and M.O. Anderson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991); trans. Richard Sharpe, *Adomnán of Iona: Life of St. Columba* (Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin, 1995). For a translation with striking photos of the island and sea around Iona, site of Columba’s main monastic community, see John Marsden, ed., and John Gregory, trans., *The Illustrated Life of Columba*, second edn (Edinburgh: Floris, 1995). For the poem “*Amra Choluim Chille*,” see Clancy and Márkus, *Iona*, pp. 104–15.
113. Benjamin Hudson, “Introduction,” in *Irish Sea Studies*, p. 14 [13–17].
114. Margaret Clunies Ross, “Land-Taking and Text-Making in Medieval Iceland,” in *Text and Territory: Geographical Imagination in the European Middle Ages*, ed. Tomasch and Gilles, p. 160 [159–184].
115. Benjamin Hudson, “The Changing Economy of the Irish Sea Province: AD 900–1300,” in *Irish Sea Studies*, pp. 21–46.
116. Benjamin Hudson, “Gaelic Princes and Gregorian Reform,” in *Irish Sea Studies*, pp. 222–23 [212–229].
117. J.H. Andrews, “The Geographical Element in Irish History,” in *A New History of Ireland I, Prehistoric and Early Ireland*, ed. Dáibhí Ó Cróinín (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 9 [1–31].
118. Nerys Patterson, *Cattle-Lords and Clansmen, the Social Structure of Early Ireland*, second edn (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1994), p. 94.

- Patterson's overall approach needs to be supplemented by Stacey's *The Road to Judgment*, Kelly's *Early Irish Farming*, and T.M. Charles-Edward's *Early Irish and Welsh Kinship* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993). See also Lisa Bitel's critique of Patterson's book, *Speculum* 71.1 (1996): 188–90. Many of Patterson's overall conclusions nonetheless are in sync with T.M. Charles-Edwards' recent exhaustive study *Early Christian Ireland*.
119. Andrews, "The Geographical Element in Irish History," pp. 6–7; 13, 18.
 120. On varied sources for the Otherworld in early vernacular literatures of what became Western Europe, see Howard Rollins Patch, *The Other World According to Descriptions in Medieval Literature* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1950), pp. 83–120, and 134–59.
 121. Jennifer Neville, *Representations of the Natural World in Old English Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1999), p. 37.
 122. O'Loughlin, *Celtic Theology: Humanity, World and God in Early Irish Writings*, and, *Journeys on the Edges: The Celtic Tradition*.
 123. Northrop Frye, "The Argument of Comedy," rpt. in *Shakespeare: Modern Essays in Criticism*, ed. Leonard F. Dean (London: Oxford University Press, 1957; rev. 1967), pp. 79–89, at 85.
 124. A.J. Toynbee, *Civilization on Trial* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1948).
 125. On today's culture as virtual reality, see Paul N. Edwards, "Cyberpunks in Cyberspace," in *The Cultures of Computing*, The Sociological Review monograph series, ed. Susan Leigh Star (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 1995), pp. 69–84.
 126. Emmanuel Lévinas, "Ethics and the Face," trans. Alfonso Lingis, in *A Phenomenology Reader*, ed. Dermot Moran and Timothy Mooney (London: Routledge and New York, 2002), p. 515 [515–28]. Moran, an Eriugenist, is a specially skilled guide. I am indebted to conversations with him, and with my former student Sarah Reese.
 127. Thompson, *Mind in Life*, pp. 402–403.
 128. See Eriugena, *Periphyseon* throughout, but, e.g., 5.25, PL914A, trans. I.P. Sheldon-Williams with John J. O'Meara, p. 587.
 129. See chapter two in this volume.
 130. Lawrence Buell, *The Environmental Imagination*, pp. 7–8. For current issues and concerns in ecocriticism since Buell's foundational definition of the ecocentric, see Ursula K. Heise's "The Hitchhiker's Guide to Ecocriticism" [*PMLA* 121 (2006): 503–16]; also Love, *Practical Ecocriticism*; Buell, *The Future of Environmental Criticism*; Deborah Bird Rose, "The Ecological Humanities in Action: An Invitation," in *Australian Humanities Review*, 31–32 (2004), <http://www.lib.latrobe.edu.au/AHR/archive/Issue-April-2004/rose.html>; Peter Fuller, "The Geography of Mother Earth," in *Iconography of Landscape: Essays on the Symbolic Representation, Design and Use of Past Environments*, ed. Denis Cosgrove and Stephen Daniels (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 11 [11–31]; and Serpil Oppermann "Toward an Ecocentric Postmodern Theory: Fusing Deep Ecology and Quantum Mechanics," *The Trumpeter* 19.1 (2003): 7–35.
 131. John Scottus Eriugena, *Periphyseon*, 5.25, PL915D, trans. Sheldon-Williams with O'Meara, p. 589.
 132. John Scottus Eriugena, *Periphyseon*, 1.1, PL 441A, trans. Sheldon-Williams with O'Meara, p. 25.
 133. Aarne Naess, *Ecology, Community and Lifestyle: Outline of an Ecosophy*, rev. edn, with David Rothenberg (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 8.
 134. Moran, *The Philosophy of John Scottus Eriugena*, pp. 243–44.

135. See Carol Bigwood, "Logos of our Eco: An Approach through Heidegger, Irigaray and Merleau-Ponty," in *Merleau-Ponty and Environmental Philosophy, Dwelling on the Landscapes of Thought*, Philosophy of the Social Sciences, ed. Suzane L. Cataldi and William S. Hamrick (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2007), pp. 93–115, at 94. Cyril of Alexandria and other early Christian writers in Christological debates at times used *logos* and *phusis* synonymously, although the precise Trinitarian terminology that became accepted was to identify *logos* and *hypostasis*.
136. For a smart summary of Eriugena's view of place (amid broader conclusions somewhat skewed by a modern Western focus), see L. Michael Harrington, *Sacred Place in Early Medieval Neoplatonism*, The New Middle Ages (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), pp. 148–56. Also, Steven Chase, ed., *Angelic Spirituality, Medieval Perspectives on the Ways of Angels*, Classics of Western Spirituality (New York: Paulist Press, 2002). This includes a translation of the crucial chapter seven of Eriugena's commentary on Dionysius' *Celestial Hierarchy*, as well as a helpful introduction. See also, however, Andrew Louth, *The Origins of the Christian Mystical Tradition: From Plato to Denys* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), and *Denys the Areopagite*, Outstanding Christian Thinkers (London and New York: Continuum, 2002), for a sense of how early medieval contexts of interpreting the Dionysian texts differed from later readings in the Scholastic era.
137. See St. Maximus the Confessor, *On the Cosmic Mystery of Christ*, trans. Paul M. Blowers and Robert Louis Wilken (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2003), especially "Ambiguum 7: On the Beginning and End of Rational Creatures," pp. 45–74.
138. Bigwood, "Logos of our Eco," p. 94.
139. On the identity of divine energies and Maximus' *logoi*, see Lars Thunberg, *Man and the Cosmos: The Vision of St. Maximus the Confessor* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1985), p. 140; and Joseph P. Farrell, *Free Choice in St. Maximus the Confessor* (South Canaan, PA: St. Tikhon's Seminary Press, 1989), pp. 181 and 191. On *logos* as "act-life," see Nicholas V. Sakharov, *I Love, Therefore I Am: The Theological Legacy of Archimandrite Sophrony* (Crestwood, NY, 2003), pp. 160–63.
140. Maximus the Confessor, *Ambigua* 22, PG 91, 1257AB, trans. Blowers and Wilken, *On the Cosmic Mystery of Jesus Christ*, p. 54; see also discussion in Farrell, *Free Choice in St. Maximus the Confessor*, p. 181.
141. Gregory of Sinai, *Discourse on the Transfiguration*, ed. David Balfour (Athens: Theologia, 1982), pp. 44–45.
142. Michael Oleksa, *Alaskan Missionary Spirituality* (New York: Paulist Press, 1987), pp. 27–28.
143. On Daoism and alternate definitions of desire as productive rather than lack, see Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus, Capitalism and Schizophrenia* 2, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), p. 157. Parallels between Christian "energy theory" and Daoist practice are explored in Hieromonk Damascene, *Christ the Eternal Tao* (Platina, CA: Valaam Books, 1999), pp. 237–38. Daoism also is cited by Hans-Georg Moeller as a traditional example of a self-organizing worldview engaging the bodily and the spatial [*Luhmann Explained From Souls to Systems*, Ideas Explained 3 (Chicago and La Salle, IL: Open Court, 2006), p. 13 and note 3].
144. Hilary Richardson, "Visual Arts and Society," in *A New History of Ireland I, Prehistoric and Early Ireland*, ed. Dáibhí Ó Cróinín (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 691 [680–713].

145. Naess, *Ecology, Community and Lifestyle*.
146. Maria Antonaccio, "Asceticism and the Ethics of Consumption," *Journal of the Society of Christian Ethics* 26 (2006): 79–96. On "ecomedievalism" and "eco-faith," see Ann Marie Rasmussen, "Visible and Invisible Landscapes: Medieval Monasticism as a Cultural Resource in the Pacific Northwest," in *A Place to Believe in: Locating Medieval Landscapes*, ed. Clare A. Lees and Gillian R. Overing (University Park: Pennsylvania University, 2006), pp. 239–59; and Jack Hitt, "A Gospel According to the Earth: Sown by Science, a New Eco-Faith Takes Root," *Harper's* (July 2003): 41–55.
147. See, e.g., Christopher Bamford's impressionistic description of Eriugena's "unique framework at once cosmic and ecological," in *The Voice of the Eagle: The Heart of Celtic Christianity, John Scotus Eriugena's Homily on the Prologue to the Gospel of St. John*, rev. edn, ed. and trans. Bamford (Great Barrington, MA: Lindisfarne Books, 2000), p. 57.
148. On animals, see Donatus, *Beasts and Birds in the Lives of the Early Irish Saints*. For example, Jonas' seventh-century account of the famous Irish *peregrinus* Columbanus and his work on the Continent, written within a generation after the latter's death, includes many stories of the saint's engagement with the natural world and its denizens [*Vita S. Columbani*, PL 87, trans. Dana C. Munro, *Translations and Reprints from the Original Sources of European History* 2.7 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1899)].
149. *In Tenga Bithnua*, "The Evernew Tongue," par. 13, trans. Máire Herbert, in *Irish Biblical Apocrypha, Selected Texts in Translation* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1989), p. 111 [109–18].
150. Moran, *The Philosophy of John Scottus Eriugena*, pp. 259–60.
151. These are explicated, respectively, in Book One, Book Two, Books Three and Four, and Book Five of the *Periphyseon*.
152. Hudson, "Time is Short," pp. 172–96.
153. Carey, *Ireland and the Grail*, which makes a case for Irish origins for elements of grail lore.
154. *Ibid.*, p. 203.
155. See discussion in Philip Sheldrake's *Living Between Worlds, Place and Journey in Celtic Spirituality* (Cambridge: Cowley, 1995), an impressionistic study that, despite limitations discussed in chapter three, dovetails well with his more extensive exploration of spatial theory in *Spaces for the Sacred*.
156. Casey, *The Fate of Place*, pp. 103–15.
157. See the discussion of narrative and time in Augustine's *Confessions* 11:23 and throughout Book 11 [trans. Henry Chadwick, Oxford World's Classics (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 233–34]; also John Romanides' discussion of the Augustinian present in *Patristic Theology: The University Lectures of Fr. John Romanides*, trans. Alexios Trader (Thessaloniki, Greece: Uncut Mountain Press, 2007), p. 274.
158. This is what Edward S. Casey calls activist memory: *Remembering: A Phenomenological Study* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1987), p. 15.
159. On place-time, see Mikhail Bakhtin, "Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel: Notes Towards a Historical Poetics," in *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, ed. Michael Holquist, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), pp. 84 and 225 [84–258]. The concept of chronotope bears relation to Edward S. Casey's description of place

- as “eventment” [Casey, “How to Get from Space to Place in a Fairly Short Stretch of Time: Phenomenological Prolegomena,” in *Senses of Place*, ed. Steven Feld and Keith H. Basso (Santa Fe: School of American Research Press, 1996), pp. 13–52].
160. In this I follow Philip Sheldrake’s discussion and adaptation of Foucault’s work in relation to medieval Christian monasticism and mysticism, in Sheldrake, *Spaces for the Sacred: Place, Memory, and Identity* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), pp. 100, 137.
 161. See the chapter “Geophilosophy” in Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, trans. Janis Tomlinson and Graham Burchell III (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), pp. 84–116.
 162. John Grim, in a talk on the emerging field of Religion and Ecology studies, at Bucknell University on April 1, 2008.
 163. Mark Bonta and John Protevi, *Deleuze and Geophilosophy, A Guide and Glossary* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004), p. 76.
 164. Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 155; Claire Colebrook, “The Space of Man: On the Specificity of Affect in Deleuze and Guattari,” in *Deleuze and Space*, Deleuze Connections, ed. Ian Buchanan and Gregg Lambert (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), p. 206, note 10 [189–206].
 165. Philip Goodchild, *Deleuze and Guattari: An Introduction to the Politics of Desire*, Theory, Culture & Society (London: SAGE Publications, 1996), p. 218. The term “ecosophy,” also used by the deep ecologist Arne Naess, was adopted by Guattari after his collaboration with Deleuze, but grew from ideas in their *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*.
 166. Peter Hallward, *Out of this World: Deleuze and the Philosophy of Creation* (London and New York: Verso, 2006), p. 4.
 167. *Ibid.*, p. 2.
 168. See Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 157. On the rhizomic as a related concept, see pp. 3–25.
 169. On Eriugena’s view of interactive theophany as fantasy, see again Books One and Two of the *Periphyseon*. Deleuze and Guattari describe earth as the ultimate “body without organs” in *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 40. On “Bodies Without Organs,” see in particular *A Thousand Plateaus*, pp. 149–66, and also Bonta and Protevi, *Deleuze and Geophilosophy*.
 170. Eriugena, *Periphyseon*, 5.25, PL915D, trans. Sheldon-Williams with O’Meara, p. 589.
 171. Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 40.
 172. Jeffrey J. Cohen, *Medieval Identity Machines*, Medieval Cultures 35 (Minneapolis and London: 2003), p. xvi.
 173. Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, pp. 149–66; see again also Bonta and Protevi, *Deleuze and Geophilosophy*, especially pp. 77–78 and pp. 62–64. Deleuze and Guattari’s theory of desiring production defines desire as physical flow, through the connecting and breaking of energy flows in organic or social desiring machines or assemblages, the registering of such flows as spots of intensity on a non-organismic body, and a diverting of part of them for enjoyment by a nomadic subject in anti-production.
 174. *Ecopoiesis*—sometimes spelled *ecopoiesis*—is defined by Jonathan Bates as poetic expression “which may effect an imaginative reunification of mind and nature,” a human dwelling within nature rather than a pastoral stage set [*The Song of the Earth* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), p. 245]. *Ecopoiesis* includes a

- sense of shaping or highlighting landscape through text; *autopoiesis* describes the tendency of an organism to produce itself internally. *Ecopoiesis* is used in the sciences, especially in the alternate spelling *ecopoiesis*, as a term for actual physical shaping of an ecology. Lawrence Buell urges ecocriticism of early texts as a kind of recovery of ecocentric traditions (*The Environmental Imagination*, p. 21).
175. Goodchild, *Deleuze and Guattari*, p. 187–88.
 176. See René Girard, *Things Hidden Since the Foundation of the World*, trans. Stephen Bann and Michael Metteer (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 1987).
 177. See Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 157. On the rhizomic as a related concept, see pp. 3–25.
 178. For more on Daoism and interest in purported scientific analogues, with potential connections to Judaeo-Christian traditions, see Fritjof Capra's *The Tao of Physics, An Exploration of the Parallels between Modern Physics and Eastern Mysticism*, twenty-fifth anniversary rev. edn (Boston: Shambhala, 2000), p. 341, and also especially in terms of Christian energy theory, Alexei V. Nesteruk, *Light from the East: Theology, Science, and the Eastern Orthodox Tradition*, Theology and the Sciences (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003).
 179. Overing and Osborne, *Landscape of Desire*, pp. 91, 93; emphasis in the original.
 180. Bonta and Protevi, "Case Study—Entangled Spaces and Semiotics in Olancho," in *Deleuze and Geophilosophy*, pp. 169–90. See also Ian Buchanan and Gregg Lambert, eds., *Deleuze and Space*, Deleuze Connections (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005).
 181. But for potential insights from American literature regarding the environment, relative to Christianity, see Douglas Burton-Christie, "Words beneath the Water: Logos, Cosmos, and the Spirit of Place," in *Christianity and Ecology: Seeking the Well-being of Earth and Humans*, ed. Deter T. Hessel and Rosemary Radford Ruether (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Center for the Study of World Religions/Harvard University Press, 2000), pp. 317–36.
 182. Peter Hallward, *Deleuze and the Philosophy of Creation: Out of this World* (London and New York: Verso, 2006), pp. 5, 37, 56. Hallward mistakenly labels Eriugena Neoplatonist, and misses important affinities between Deleuze–Guattari's "otherworldly" view of desire as creativity, and physical concerns of environmental philosophy today.
 183. See John Protevi's review of *Out of this World: Deleuze and the Philosophy of Creation*, in *Notre Dame Philosophical Reviews*, <http://ndpr.nd.edu/review.cfm?id=10564> [accessed April 30, 2008].
 184. Philip Goodchild, *Deleuze and Guattari*, p. 198–99.
 185. *Ibid.*, p. 199.
 186. Michael Schellenberger and Ted Nordhaus, "The Death of Environmentalism" (2004), http://www.thebreakthrough.org/images/Death_of_Environmentalism.pdf [accessed May 21, 2008], p. 34.
 187. Real myth is offered here as an experiential variant of J.R.R. Tolkien's phrase "true myth" [see Joseph Pearce, *Tolkien: Man and Myth* (London: HarperCollins, 1998), p. 60; and Alfred K. Siewers, "Tolkien's Cosmic-Christian Ecology: The Medieval Underpinnings," in *Tolkien's Modern Middle Ages*, The New Middle Ages, ed. Jane Chance and Siewers (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), pp. 138–53.
 188. I am indebted to John Carey's *A Single Ray of the Sun* for connections between Eriugena, nature, and the Otherworld, although not in this ecocritical framework.

189. I am indebted in this picture of the Confluence to Katharine Faull's sharing of her work in translating and editing Moravian diaries from Old Shamokin, which promise when published to offer a remarkable window on this almost forgotten world.
190. Exemplified by the subtitle of Cooper's Leatherstocking book *The Pioneers*, "the Source of the Susquehanna."

2 Reading the Otherworld Environmentally

1. Osborn Bergin and R.I. Best, "Tochmarc Étaíne," *Ériu* 12 (1938): 180–81 [137–96].
2. For translations, compare John Carey, *Tochmarc Étaíne*, in *The Celtic Heroic Age: Literary Sources for Ancient Celtic Europe and Early Ireland and Wales*, Celtic Studies Publications 1, ed. John T. Koch with John Carey (Malden, MA: Celtic Studies Publications, 1995), p. 149 [135–54]; Jeffrey Gantz, ed. *Early Irish Myths and Sagas* (London: Penguin, 1981), pp. 55–56; and Bergin and Best, "Tochmarc Étaíne," p. 181 [137–96].
3. The triptych until the 1930s was only known to modern scholars in fragmentary form from the same manuscript as the First Recension of the *Táin Bó Cúailnge*, the *Lebor na hUidre*, ca. 1100. A complete version was found in the later medieval *Yellow Book of Lecan* manuscript. The edition used here is Bergin and Best, "Tochmarc Étaíne," pp. 137–96. As discussed there, the early Celticist Rudolf Thurneysen placed the story's core linguistics in the ninth century, a date related to fragmentary references to elements of it in other texts, but called its current version a late eleventh-century retelling. See Thurneysen, *Die irische Helden- und Königssage bis zum siebzehnten Jahrhundert* (Halle: M. Niemeyer, 1921), pp. 47, 77, 78. Other scholars have placed its origins perhaps in the eighth century, which, significantly in terms of the themes of land and contract as discussed, would parallel the full establishment of Ireland's synthesized seventh-century legal system.
4. E.G. Quin, ed, *Dictionary of the Irish Language Based Mainly on Old and Middle Irish Materials* (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 1990), s.v.
5. Martin Heidegger, "The Thing," in Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. Albert Hofstadter (New York: HarperCollins, 2001), p. 179 [163–80].
6. Martin Heidegger, "Conversation on a Country Path about Thinking," in Heidegger, *Discourse on Thinking*, trans. J.M. Anderson and E.H. Freund (New York: Harper, 1966), pp. 58–90; and "The Thing," Jeff Malpas, *Heidegger's Topology: Being, Place, World* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2007), pp. 195–98.
7. Martin Heidegger, "Die Kunst und der Raum," in Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe* 13 (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1983), p. 207 [203–210], trans. Edward S. Casey, *The Fate of Place: A Philosophical History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), p. 283.
8. World Wildlife Fund, "Ecoregions," at <http://www.worldwildlife.org/science/ecoregions/item1847.html> [accessed July 16, 2008].
9. On a possible common root for the Welsh and Irish terms related to "peace" and "settled seat," see John Koch, *Celtic Culture: A Historical Encyclopedia*, 5 vols. (Oxford: ABC-CLIO-2006), vol. 4, p. 1610.
10. On "rhizomic," see Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus, Capitalism and Schizophrenia* 2, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), pp. 3–25.

11. Monastic prototypes for that ascetic background can be glimpsed in texts such as Adomnán's Hiberno-Latin *Vita S. Columbae* (ca. 700), from the Western Isles of Scotland, and John Climacus' earlier Greek *Ladder of Divine Ascent* (ca. 600), from the Sinai Desert. St. John Climacus' work includes an emphasis on the desert, and, as the penultimate of its thirty steps, finding heaven on earth through asceticism. His emphasis on Greek *apatheia* and *hesychia* (dispassion that is a burning love for God, and quietude, respectively) needs to be understood in the context of the "energy theory" discussed in chapter one. Renunciation of the world in that context is renunciation of objectification for uncreated energies of grace by psychosomatic *ascesis* (exercise or struggle). See St. John Climacus, *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*, trans. Archimandrite Lazarus Moore, rev. edn (Brookline, MA: Holy Transfiguration Monastery, 1991).
12. Erazim Kohák, *The Embers and the Stars* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), pp. 16, 18.
13. "Laying down a path in walking" (a phrase coined by biologist Francisco Varela) is the dominant metaphor for human development in Evan Thompson, *Mind in Life: Biology, Phenomenology, and the Sciences of Mind* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap-Harvard University Press, 2007). For Thompson's discussion of the role of ecopoiesis in this, see pp. 118–22, and 382–411. See also Rebecca Solnit, *Wanderlust: A History of Walking* (New York: Penguin, 2000), p. 13.
14. For examples of traditional Indian cultural narratives in the Great Lakes, see Edward Benton-Benai, *The Mishomis Book: The Voice of the Ojibway* (Hayward, WI: Red School House-Indian Country Communications, 1988); on recent ecological restoration efforts in that region to shape new community narratives, see William K. Stevens, *Miracle Under the Oaks: The Revival of Nature in America* (New York: Pocket Books, 2006).
15. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *What is Philosophy?* trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchell (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), p. 169; emphasis in the original.
16. Philip Goodchild, *Deleuze and Guattari: An Introduction to the Politics of Desire, Theory, Culture & Society* (London: SAGE Publications, 1996), p. 190.
17. *Táin Bó Cúailnge from the Book of Leinster*, ed. Cecile O'Rahilly [Dublin: Dublin Institute of Advanced Studies, School of Celtic Studies (henceforth abbreviated as Dublin Institute), 1967], line 4855, p. 143; trans. p. 270. This is the later twelfth-century Second Recension.
18. Erica Sessle summarizes Medb's putative backgrounds in Irish sovereignty goddess mythology in "Misogyny and Medb, Approaching Medb with Feminist Criticism," in *Ulidia*, ed. J.P. Mallory and G. Stockman (Belfast: December Publications, 1994), pp. 135–38.
19. *De Chopur in dá Muccida* ("The Quarrel of the Two Swineherds"), in the Book of Leinster; trans. Thomas Kinsella, *The Táin* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970), pp. 46–51.
20. An early text about Ath Luin refers to the two sons of Crond mac Agnomain, Macha's husband, as Rucht and Rucne, the names of the two swineherds who became the bulls of the *Táin*. Whitley Stokes, "The Prose Tales in the Rennes Dindshenchas," in *Revue celtique* 15 (1894): 466 [272–336, 418–84], and 16 (1895): 31–83, 135–67, 269–312]. Garrett Olmsted notes that this relation of offspring associated with Macha to quadrupeds may be a mythic analogue of portrayals of the Gallo-Celtic horse goddess Epona between two colts, which would link her to the figure Rhiannon in the *Mabinogi*; *The Gods of the Celts and the Indo-Europeans*,

- Archaeolingua 6 (Budapest: Archaeolingua Alapítvány, 1994), pp. 169–71. There Olmstead also summarizes etymological issues in the relation between Macha and the Irish term *mag* for field or plain, the adoption of which for the figure Macha may have been a secondary development from Emain as a name for a horse goddess meaning “swift one,” though later understood in Emain Macha as “twins of Macha.”
21. Olmsted in his extensive philological efforts to reconstruct a Celtic pantheon of gods suggested a proto-pantheon of European myth in which the bulls represent varying sides of a shape-shifting deity of tree fruit (hence perhaps the relation to Emain Abhlach with its fruit associations) most often appearing in “bull-like guise” (*The Gods of the Celts and the Indo-Europeans*, p. 269). In his schema the destruction of the white bull is related to the end of the winter season he associates with the goddess Bóand, whose name means “white cow,” for whom the Boyne is named (p. 271). Similarly, the ancient Mediterranean god Dionysos has been described as expressing a bull-associated “two-fold nature” representing winter and summer (Carl Kerényi, *Dionysos: Archetypal Image of Indestructible Life* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976), pp. 63, 115). See also Caroline Humphrey, “Chiefly and Shamanist Landscapes in Mongolia,” in *The Anthropology of Landscape: Perspectives on Place and Space*, ed. Eric Hirsch and Michael O’Hanlon (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), p. 135 [135–62].
 22. *Noinden Ulad or Tochmarc Cruinn ocus Macha*. “The Debility of the Ulsterman” or “The Wooing of Crunn and Macha,” ed. and trans. Vernam Hull, *Celtica* 8 (1968): 1–42; “Tochmarc Cruinn,” ed. Rudolf Thurneysen, *ZCP* 12 (1918): 251–54; trans. Thomas Kinsella, *The Táin*, pp. 6–8.
 23. N.B. Aitchison, *Armagh and the Royal Centres in Early Medieval Ireland* (Woodbridge, UK: Cruithne/Boydell & Brewer, 1994); and in Alfred K. Siewers, *Stories of the Land: Nature and Religion in Early British and Irish Literary Landscapes*, unpublished PhD dissertation (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois, 2001).
 24. See Aitchison, *Armagh and the Royal Centres in Early Medieval Ireland*.
 25. Miranda J. Green, *Animals in Celtic Life and Myth* (London: Routledge, 1993), p. 191; “Sinnan,” in *The Metrical Dindshenchas*, ed. Edward J. Gwynn, 5 vols (Dublin 1903–35; repr. Dublin Institute, 1991), vol. 3, pp. 292–95; also “The prose tales in the Rennes Dindshenchas,” part 2, ed. Whitley Stokes, *Revue Celtique* 15 (1894): 457 [418–84].
 26. A potential stereographic effect of illuminated manuscripts such as the Book of Kells is described by Oliver Sacks in his article “Stereo Sue” in *The New Yorker* magazine of June 19, 2006, pp. 64–73. See also Jacob D. Benestein, “Information in the Holographic Universe,” *Scientific American* (August 2003): 58–65.
 27. Sacks, “Stereo Sue.”
 28. On the relation of *Tochmarc Étaíne* to the Ulster Cycle, see Joan Radner, “‘Fury Destroys the World’: Historical Strategy in Ireland’s Ulster Epic,” *The Mankind Quarterly* 23 (1982): 42–60.
 29. A good source for tracing names of Celtic literary characters in relation to mythology and root meanings is Olmsted’s *The Gods of the Celts and the Indo-Europeans*; on Dagda and Bóand see pp. 43–45; some of the name interpretations here also draw on Jeffrey Gantz’s endnotes to his translation of the story in *Early Irish Myths and Sagas*.
 30. Osborn Bergin and R.I. Best, “Tochmarc Étaíne,” p. 146.
 31. Goodchild, *Deleuze and Guattari*, pp. 194.

32. On that variation, see the background summary and translated version of the story in Tom P. Cross and Clark Harris Slover, *Ancient Irish Tales* (New York: Henry Holt, 1936), pp. 82–92.
33. Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion*, trans. Willard R. Trask (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1987).
34. On the *omphalos* and *axis mundi* and shamanic knowledge, see Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane, the Nature of Religion*, trans. Willard R. Trask (1957; repr. New York: Harcourt, 1987); and *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004).
35. R.I. Best, ed., “The Settling of the Manor of Tara,” *Ériu* 10 (1908–10): 152 [121–72].
36. On Lucretius, see Duncan F. Kennedy, *Rethinking Reality: Lucretius and the Textualization of Space* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2002). On these various views of place and space, see Casey’s magisterial *Fate of Place* survey. On political ramifications today of universal space, see Antonio Hardt and Michael Negri, *Empire* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), influenced by Deleuze and Guattari.
37. The classic examination of the Sovereignty motif in early Irish literature is by Proinsias Mac Cana, “Aspects of the Theme of King and Goddess in Irish Literature,” *Études Celtiques* 7 (1955–56): 76–114, 356–413, and 8 (1958–59): 59–65. For the best recent scholarly survey of the Sovereignty goddess trope, see Máire Herbert, “Goddess and King: The Sacred Marriage in Early Ireland,” in *Women and Sovereignty*, ed. Louise Olga Fradenburg (Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh Press, 1992), pp. 265–75. For parallels to the trope in Byzantine imperial iconography featuring the Virgin Mary, see Dean A. Miller, “Byzantine Sovereignty and Feminine Potencies,” in *Women and Sovereignty*, Cosmos Yearbook 7, ed. Louise O. Fradenburg (Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh Press), pp. 250–63.
38. Walter L. Brennen, Jr., observed: “In the Irish meaning of the word, sovereignty, because she is a woman, carries a sense of ‘being with’ rather than ‘being above’ or distant from its object. It also conveys a sense of containment present in being in a place surrounded by its power,” in “Serpents, Cows, and Ladies: Contrasting Symbolism in Irish and Indo-European Cattle-Raiding Myths,” *History of Religions* 28 (1989): 346 [340–54]. Christina Harrington, *Women in a Celtic Church, Ireland 450–1150* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), notes that while the cult of Mary arose in Ireland earlier than extant evidence for most of Western Europe, in the seventh century, it did not involve a binarizing of Mary’s chaste womanhood and the feminine generally, or of Mary and Eve (pp. 280–82).
39. John Koch most recently interpreted the name as likely a diminutive form of Old Irish *ét*, meaning “passion” or “jealousy,” in *Celtic Culture: A Historical Encyclopedia*, vol. 5, p. 1675. Gantz in his translation includes “radiance” as a possible meaning. Interestingly, given the association of a mound named for her with a god of poetry, early Irish *etan* means “poetry.”
40. See especially Kevin Murray, ed., *Baile in Scáil*: “The Phantom’s Frenzy,” Irish Texts Society 58 (Dublin: Irish Texts Society, 2004).
41. On Irigary and place, see Casey, *The Fate of Place*, pp. 321–30.
42. On “feminine subtext” as a term developed in relation to Arthurian literature, see Geraldine Heng, “Enchanted Ground: The Feminine Subtext in Malory,” in Sir Thomas Malory, *Le Morte Darthur*, ed. Stephen H.A. Shepherd (New York: W.W. Norton, 2004), pp. 835–49.

43. The shaping of non-Roman ethnic identities perhaps marked an opportunity, in tandem with conversion, for relatively less patriarchal social structures than the Classical Roman model (though still often oppressive), as seen perhaps also in some aspects of Anglo-Saxon texts. On women in early Ireland, see Lisa M. Bitel, *Land of Women, Tales of Sex and Gender from Early Ireland* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996), pp. 10–11; Donnchadh Ó Corráin, “Ireland c. 800: Aspects of Society,” in Dáibhí Ó Cróinín, ed., *A New History of Ireland I, Prehistoric and Early Ireland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 572 [549–608]; Fergus Kelly, *Early Irish Farming: A Study Based Mainly on the Law-Texts of the 7th and 8th Centuries AD*, Early Irish Law Series IV (Dublin: Dublin Institute, 1997), pp. 351, 400, 415, 448–50. Christina Harrington’s more recent project, *Women in a Celtic Church: Ireland 450–1150*, concludes: “Irish views show a consistent pattern: womankind as a whole, though prone to folly... was not made into ‘the enemy’—either of the male sex generally or of the clergy in particular” (p. 289), a view that differentiated Irish monastic literary culture from trends in Western Europe in the tenth–twelfth centuries. On distinctive legal rights for women, see Donnchadh Ó Corráin, “Women in Early Irish Society,” in *Women in Irish Society: The Historical Dimension*, ed. Margaret MacCurtain and Donnchadh Ó Corráin (Dublin: Arlen House, 1978), pp. 1–13, which comments on an apparent increase of legal rights for women during the early Christian era. See also discussion of the increase in penalties for violence against women in the *Cáin Adomnáin* of 697, spearheaded by Adomnán of Iona, in Caitlin Corning, *The Celtic and Roman Traditions, Conflict and Consensus in the Early Medieval Church* (New York and Houndmills, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), p. 155. For a summary of the legal system generally, see T.M. Charles Edwards, “Early Irish Law,” in Ó Cróinín, ed., *A New History of Ireland I*, pp. 331–70. Nerys Patterson argues for a “framework of alternatives” for women’s status, including paradigms (at least among the elite) of marriage as a partnership of sorts [*Cattle-Lords and Clansmen, the Social Structure of Early Ireland*, second edn (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1994), p. 295]. See also Katharine Simms, “Women,” in *Medieval Ireland, an Encyclopedia*, ed., Seán Duffy (London: Routledge, 2005), pp. 520–22. The early literature also includes, as Doris Edel notes in her discussion of women in early Ireland, a unique body of feminine-focused genealogies, the *Banshenchas*, in “Early Irish Queens and Royal Power: A First Reconnaissance,” in *Ogma: Essays in Celtic Studies in Honour of Próinséas Ní Chatháin*, ed. Michael Richter and Jean-Michel Picard (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2002), p. 2 [1–19]. The presence of legally privileged female holy figures also was attested in monastic rules (Colmán Etchingham, *Church Organisation in Ireland AD 650 to 1000* (Maynooth, Ireland: Laigin Publications, 1999), p. 330. Regarding women as official poets, see James Carney, “Language and Literature to 1169,” in Ó Cróinín, *A New History of Ireland*, pp. 453–54 [451–510]. Their numbers apparently were few yet their acceptance suggestive. The term *cumal*, referring both to a female slave and value of currency related to cattle (Patterson, *Cattle-Lords and Clansmen*, p. 73; Kelly, *Early Irish Farming*, p. 593), highlights an association of women, cattle, and the land that is oppressively patriarchal, yet also related to the mythical connection of women with fertility, cattle, and Sovereignty, as in the central *Táin* narratives (Ó Corráin, “Ireland c. 800: Aspects of Society,” in Ó Cróinín, *A New History of Ireland*, p. 572 [549–608]).
44. On such traditions of Mary in Greek sources, see Holy Apostles Convent, *The Life of the Virgin Mary, the Theotokos, viewed and treated within the framework of Sacred*

- Scriptures, Holy Tradition, Patristics and other ancient writings, together with the Liturgical and Iconographic Traditions of the Holy Orthodox Church* (Buena Vista, CO: Holy Apostles Convent and Dormition Skete, 1989), especially, regarding the mountain image, p. 30. On Paradise as a mountain encompassing earth and sea, see Howard Rollins Patch, *The Other World According to Descriptions in Medieval Literature* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1950), p. 142; and St. Ephrem the Syrian, *Hymns on Paradise*, trans. Sebastian Brock (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir Seminary Press, 1997), p. 54; Hymn 1.6–7, pp. 79–80.
45. Luce Irigaray, “The Way of Breath,” in *Between East and West*, European Perspectives, trans. Stephen Pluhacek (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), pp. 78–79, 91 [73–91].
 46. See discussion in Marina Smyth, “The Body, Death, and Resurrection: Perspectives of an Early Irish Theologian,” *Speculum* 83 (2008): 545–46 [531–71]. Regarding bodily metonymy, see pp. 543–44. Augustinus Hibernicus discusses the divine light or energy of Christ at the Transfiguration in *De Mirabilibus Sacrae Scripturae* 3.11, PL 35: 2197–98, translated and cited by Smyth at p. 538.
 47. Bergin and Best, “Tochmarc Étaíne,” pp. 180–81.
 48. Luce Irigaray, “He Risks Who Risks Life Itself,” in *The Irigaray Reader*, ed. Margaret Whitford, trans. David Macey (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1991), p. 218 [213–18].
 49. From a definition of *tuirigin*; *Sanas Cormaic*, ed. Kuno Meyer (1913, repr. Lampeter, UK: Llanerch Publishers, 1994), no. 1224, p. 106. A self-described “very provisional” translation from Dennis King on the Old Irish listserv, July 27, 2003, is at <https://listserv.heatnet.ie/cgi-bin/wa?A2=OLD-IRISH-L;0iHMBw;20030727215918-0700> [accessed July 7, 2008].
 50. Thanks to Tomás Ó Cathasaigh’s suggestion of links between Étaín, sovereignty, and early Irish law in his talk “Love, Law, and *The Wooing of Étaín*” at Bucknell University, March 2, 2006; also especially to my student A. Joseph McMullen, for invaluable insights developed in his “A Living Land: *Tochmarc Étaíne* and the Sovereignty Goddess” (presented at the forty-second International Congress on Medieval Studies at Kalamazoo, May 12, 2007), especially in terms of land and land ethic; see also Aldo Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac*, 1949 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).
 51. Thanks to Early Irish scholar Cairtriona Ó Dochartaigh for suggesting this to me in generous feedback to a presentation on some of these ideas at University College Cork’s Early Irish seminar, November 10, 2004.
 52. *Dictionary of the Irish Language*, s.v. A further meaning of *dúil* attested in the medieval *Metrical Dindshenchas* is “desire” or “propensity,” perhaps including an ascetic sense of eros. And another perhaps related word with medieval attestations, *dúal*, carries the meaning of both “natural” and “belonging to by right,” as in heritage.
 53. On contractual social emphases, see Patterson, *Cattle-Lords and Clansmen*, pp. 374–75. On related premodern concepts of gift-giving as a quasi-erotic exchange of “creative spirit,” see Lewis Hyde, *Gift: The Imagination and the Erotic Life of Property* (New York: Vintage, 1983).
 54. Damian Bracken, “The Fall and the Law in Early Ireland,” in *Ireland and Europe in the Early Middle Ages: Texts and Transmission*, ed. P. Ní Chatháin and M. Richter (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2002), pp. 147–69. Ó Corraín, “Ireland c. 800: Aspects of Society,” p. 594 [348–608].
 55. T.M. Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 225.

56. Amy C. Eichhorn-Mulligan, "The Anatomy of Power and the Miracle of Kingship: The Female Body of Sovereignty in a Medieval Irish Kingship Tale," *Speculum* 81.4 (October 2006): 1014–54.
57. The notion of a king's *fír* is explicated in *Audacht Morainn* ("The Testament of Morann") known to have been in some form in the eighth-century *Lebor Dromma Snechtai*. See Fergus Kelly, ed., *Audacht Morainn* (Dublin: Dublin Institute, 1976). The late Middle Irish text *Scél na Fír Flatha* is discussed by John Carey in *Ireland and the Grail* (Aberystwyth, UK: Celtic Studies Publications, 2008), p. 88.
58. See chapter six in this volume.
59. The conjunction of forest clearance and causeway construction may be a mythic memory of the prehistoric so-called Destruction-phase of Irish woodlands, ca. 300 CE, posited by archaeologists. See Kelly, *Early Irish Farming*, p. 4.
60. Miller, "Byzantine Sovereignty and Feminine Potencies," pp. 250–63.
61. Harrington, *Women in a Celtic Church, Ireland 450–1150*, pp. 280–82.
62. Wendell Berry, *The Unsettling of America, Culture and Agriculture* (San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1977), p. 123.
63. Versions of the story are found in *Lebor na hUidre* and the Yellow Book of Lecan, among other manuscripts. Accounts of Conaire's parentage seem garbled to mask the incest associated with his birth. An explicit connection with otherworldly revenge is in the outline of an alternate version of the story, *Togail Bruidne Uí Derga*. See Vernam Hull, "Togail Bruidne Da Derga: The *Cín Dromma Snechta* recension," *ZCP* 24 (1953): 131–32; and Tomás Ó Cathasaigh, "On the *Cín Dromma Snechta* version of *Togail Bruidne Uí Dergae*," *Ériu* 41 (1990): 103–14.
64. On the theme of balance between goddess and king, see Sessle, "Misogyny and Medb."
65. John Carey, "Tara and the Supernatural," in *The Kingship and Landscape of Tara*, ed. Edel Bhreathnach (Dublin: Four Courts Press for The Discovery Programme, 2005), pp. 32–48; see footnote 90, p. 48. For a recent edition of *Baile in Scáil*, see Murray, ed., *Baile in Scáil*: "The Phantom's Frenzy."
66. On the learned "mandarin class," see Donnchadh Ó Corráin, "Nationality and Kingship in Pre-Norman Ireland," in *Nationality and the Pursuit of National Independence, Papers Read before the Conference Held at Trinity College, Dublin, May 26–31, 1975*, ed. T.W. Moody (Belfast: Appletree Press, 1978), p. 19 [1–35]. For an excellent, fairly recent survey of what is known about early Irish monasticism, see Colmán Etchingham, *Church Organisation in Ireland AD 650 to 1000* (Maynooth: Laigin Press, 1999), chapters 7–10, pp. 290–455.
67. On earlier peoples in the Otherworld landscape, see chapter one, note 98.
68. John Romanides, *Patristic Theology: The University Lectures of Fr. John Romanides*, trans. Alexios Trader (Thessaloniki, Greece: Uncut Mountain Press, 2007), p. 275.
69. Carey, *Ireland and the Grail*, p. 330.
70. To compare passive and active memory, see Augustine, *Confessions*, 11:20; trans. R.S. Pine-Coffin (Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin, 1961), p. 269; and Edward S. Casey, *Remembering: A Phenomenological Study* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1987), p. 15.
71. Aarne Naess, *Ecology, Community and Lifestyle: Outline of an Ecosophy*, rev. edn, with David Rothenberg (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).
72. Elizabeth Robertson, "The 'Elvyssh' Power of Constance: Christian Feminism in Geoffrey Chaucer's The Man of Law's Tale," *Studies in the Age of Chaucer* 23 (2001): 143–80.

73. Benjamin Hudson, "Time is Short," in *Irish Sea Studies*, p. 181 [170–96].
74. Eriugena, *Periphyseon* V.31 and 38; PL 122, 946A, 998B, 999B, and 1000B–C; trans. I.P. Sheldon-Williams with John J. O'Meara, *Periphyseon (The Division of Nature)*, Cahiers d'études médiévales, Cahier spécial 3 (Montreal: Éditions Bellarmin and Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks, 1987), p. 624, 685, 686, and 688.
75. Augustine, *Confessions*, 11:20; trans. R.S. Pine-Coffin (Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin, 1961), p. 269.
76. For Heidegger's discussion of ecstatic time or temporality, see his *Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, trans. Albert Hofstadter (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992).
77. Carey, *Ireland and the Grail*, p. 221.
78. Casey, *Remembering: A Phenomenological Study*, p. 15.
79. See Barry Raftery, *Ancient Pagan Ireland: The Enigma of the Irish Iron Age* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1998), chapter five, pp. 98–111.
80. Jerry Lewis, former Potawatomi Citizens tribal historian and Newberry Library D'Arcy McNicle Center research fellow; private conversations.
81. A.G. Van Hamel, *Aspects of Celtic Mythology*, Proceedings of the British Academy 20 (London: Humphrey Milford Amen House, 1934), p. 13, 18, 24.
82. The story of Patrick is associated with the famous protective *lorica* or breast-plate prayer-poem known as *fáth fiada* or "Deer's Cry," a title perhaps related to the *féid fiada* practices of druidic invisibility. Oliver Davies, ed., "The Sources: Introduction to the Translated Texts," *Celtic Spirituality*, p. 31 [26–61].
83. *Periphyseon* V.6, PL 872A–873D; trans. Sheldon-Williams with O'Meara, pp. 536–38. For Eriugena's declaration of all miracles as natural, see *Periphyseon* V.24, PL 901C [trans. Sheldon-Williams with O'Meara, p. 574; see also trans. Myra L. Uhlfelder, with Jean A. Potter, ed., *Periphyseon, On the Division of Nature*, Library of the Liberal Arts (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1976), p. 306]. C.S. Lewis claimed a therapeutic effect for literary overlay landscape derivative of the Otherworld trope in Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene (The Allegory of Love: A Study in Medieval Tradition)* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1959), p. 359. Lewis, an Ulsterman, also wrote: "There is a real affinity between his *Faerie Queene*, a poem of quests and wanderings and inextinguishable desires, and Ireland itself—the soft, wet air, the loneliness, the muffled shapes of the hills, the heart-rending sunsets," in "Edmund Spenser, 1552–99," in *Studies in Medieval and Renaissance Literature*, ed. Walter Hooper (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966), p. 126 [121–45].
84. On abjection and the feminine, see Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror* (1980), trans. Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), p. 210.
85. Gantz, *Early Irish Myths and Sagas*, p. 38.
86. Eichhorn-Mulligan, "The Anatomy of Power and the Miracle of Kingship."
87. The feast of the Assumption or Dormition of Mary in mid-August follows the Feast of Transfiguration, with both overlapping the Irish harvest festival of Lughnasa in the first half of August. The Assumption–Dormition feast marks in Christian tradition the "falling asleep" of the Mother of God, depicted in iconography by Jesus holding her soul in the form of a baby; attempted desecration of her body is marked by startling bodily miracles; her body then is taken up into heaven from Gethsemane, the ultimate Christian place of abjection. On the native side of those parallel holidays, Lughnasa reputedly memorialized Tailtiu, foster mother of the god Lug. Tailtiu, according to the eleventh-century fantasy history of the

Lebor Gabála Éirenn, died shockingly after clearing forests to make the plain of Breg in Meath. See Máire McNeill, *The Festival of Lughnasadh* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962).

88. See Matthew 17.
89. Bergin and Best, "Tochmarc Étaíne," pp. 184–85.
90. Carol Bigwood, "Logos of our Eco: An Approach through Heidegger, Irigaray and Merleau-Ponty," in *Merleau-Ponty and Environmental Philosophy, Dwelling on the Landscapes of Thought*, Philosophy of the Social Sciences, ed. Suzanne L. Cataldi and William S. Hamrick (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2007), p. 94. An identification of *logos* and *phusis* occurred at times in the complex terminology of fifth-century Christological debates; however, Byzantine theologians at large came to Christological *Logos* in terms of the mystery of incarnate *hypostasis* instead with the Christological *Logos*. Heidegger's own definition of *phusis* echoes the term's earlier very particular use by Cyril of Alexandria, although in vastly different contexts. See John McGuckin, *St. Cyril of Alexandria and the Christological Controversy* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2004), pp. 207–26; and John Romanides, "St. Cyril's 'One Physis or Hypostasis of God the Logos Incarnate and Chalcedon,'" in *Christ in East and West*, ed. Paul R. Fries and Tiran Nersoyan (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1987), pp. 15–34.
91. Carey, *Ireland and the Grail*, pp. 19, 221, 330.
92. Julia Kristeva, "Women's Time," in *The Portable Kristeva*, updated edn, ed. Kelly Oliver (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), pp. 351–371.
93. See Val Plumwood, *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature (Opening Out)* (London: Routledge, 1993) includes an ecofeminist focus on the binary of nature/reason as related to gender. Patristic views of Mary as the *Theotokos* or God-bearer/cocreator can (in terms used by Eriugena) identify the feminine with otherworldly formation, forms, and energies (Eriugena, *Periphyseon* 4.24, PL 851B and PL 853C, trans. Sheldon-Williams with O'Meara, *Periphyseon*, p. 511), and the masculine (in the form of the incarnate God) with physical nature and the earth (reversing enduring conventions)—and vice versa. Eriugena following some earlier patristic writers also held that Christ was no longer male after the Resurrection.
94. David Wood, "What is Eco-Phenomenology?" in *Eco-Phenomenology, Back to the Earth Itself*, Environmental Philosophy and Ethics, ed. Charles S. Brown and Ted Toadvine (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press), pp. 211–33.
95. *Ibid.*, 213.
96. Thompson, *Mind in Life*, p. 356 and 333.
97. *Ibid.*, pp. 118–22.
98. *Ibid.*, pp. 290–91.
99. Evan Thompson, *Colour Vision, A Study in Cognitive Science and the Philosophy of Perception* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), pp. 302.
100. See Richard Pevear with Larissa Volokhonsky, Foreword, Dostoevsky's *Demons* (New York: Vintage Books, 1995), pp. xviii–xix. Charles Lock, "Bakhtin and the Tropes of Orthodoxy," in *Bakhtin and Religion: A Feeling for Faith*, ed. Susan M. Felch and Paul J. Contino (Evanston IL: Northwestern University Press, 2001), pp. 97–119.
101. Modern editions of the *Mabinogi* (in order of the branches) include: R.L. Thomson, ed., *Pwyll Pendewic Dyuet* (Dublin: Dublin Institute, 1957); Derick S. Thomson, ed., *Branwen Uerch Lyr* (Dublin: Dublin Institute, 1957); Patrick K. Ford, ed., *Manawydan uab Llyr* (Belmont, MA: Ford & Bailile, 2000); *Math uab Mathonwy*

- (Belmont, MA: Ford & Bailie, 1999), all based mainly on the diplomatic edition by J. Gwenogvryn Evans, *The White Book Mabinogion: Welsh Tales and Romances, Reproduced from the Peniarth Manuscripts* (Pwylheli, 1907). For another foundational edition of the Welsh text, see Sir Ifor Williams, ed., *Pedeir Keinc y Mabinogi*, 1951, second edn (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1951). Translations include Patrick K. Ford, trans., *The Mabinogi and Other Medieval Welsh Tales* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977); and Gwyn Jones and Thomas Jones, trans., *The Mabinogion*, Everyman 168, 1949, rev. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2000). See also new translations by John K. Bollard [*The Mabinogi, Legend and Landscape of Wales* (Llandysul, UK: Gomer, 2006)], with striking photos of related Welsh topography; and Sioned Davies, *The Mabinogion*, Oxford World's Classics (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).
102. On the conflict between native *clasau* and the new Norman colonial order, see R.R. Davies, *Conquest Coexistence and Change: Wales 1063–1415*, History of Wales, vol. 2 (Oxford and Cardiff: Clarendon Press and University of Wales Press, 1987); and F.G. Cowley, *The Monastic Order in South Wales, 1066–1349*, Studies in Welsh History (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1977), especially pp. 1–2. On the provenance of the texts, see Patrick Sims-Williams, “Clas Beuno and the Four Branches of the Mabinogi,” in *150 Jahre “Mabinogion”—Deutsch-Walisische Kulturbeziehungen*, ed. Bernhard Maier and Stefan Zimmer (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 2001), p. 112 [111–127]; and Brinley F. Roberts, “Where were the Four Branches of the *Mabinogi* written?” *CSANA Yearbook* 1 (2001): 61–73. Helen Fulton recently has tried to push forward the date of the Four Branches to the thirteenth century, as part of her theory of the work as representing a sequential Welsh education manual for different types of feudal princes. Her late dating in an effort to make her point primary is not convincing, if taken to mean composition *ex nihilo*, in light of philological and topographical suggestions advanced by Sims-Williams and earlier scholarship, strongly implying origins of the composition in native *clasau*. See Fulton, “The *Mabinogi* and the Education of Princes,” in *Medieval Celtic Literature and Society*, ed. Fulton (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2005), pp. 230–47.
 103. Carey, *Ireland and the Grail*, p. 117. On dating the *Táin Bó Cuailnge*, see chapters five and six in this volume.
 104. *Ibid.*, p. 131.
 105. Bollard, *The Mabinogi, Legend and landscape of Wales*, p. 13.
 106. Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?* p. 169.
 107. Goodchild, *Deleuze and Guattari*, pp. 190, 219.
 108. On the term *mabinogi* see Eric P. Hemp, “Mabinogi and Archaism,” *Celtica* 23 (1999): 96–10, especially 104–110; also, the Celticist John Bollard offers a recent helpful survey of the issues online at <http://themabinogi.googlepages.com/mabinogiandmabinogion> [accessed May 12, 2009].
 109. Matthew Arnold, *On the Study of Celtic Literature and Other Essays*, 1867 (repr. London: Dent, Everyman, 1976), p. 54.
 110. In terms of the geophilosophy of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, early medieval Wales in the Conquest era could be considered a “primitive society” with an ethos influenced by nomadic tendencies of its pastoral economy and monastic exile traditions, in its resisting a more systematically centralized social pattern (Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*. See also Mark Bonta and John Protevi, *Deleuze and Geophilosophy, A Guide and Glossary* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004).

111. Perhaps somewhat ironically, in hindsight, Gregory, also honored in Ireland (where he was claimed to have had an Irish father), as in Byzantium particularly for his *Dialogues*, was a key adaptive interpreter of Augustinian approaches for the later medieval church, and became in Anglo-Saxon historiography in effect spiritual father of later Anglo-Saxon cultural identity through his sponsorship of the mission to what is now England.
112. The etymology has been a general consensus of scholars including Marged Haycock (to whose private communication on this I am indebted); however, John Koch has also proposed an alternative and perhaps older root meaning related to hedge, earthwork, or possibly sacrifice (*Celtic Culture: A Historical Encyclopedia*, vol. 1, p. 79).
113. Patrick Ford, "Prolegomena to a Reading of the *Mabinogi*," in *The Mabinogi*, ed. C.W. Sullivan III (New York: Garland Press, 1996) pp. 197–216; "Introduction," in *The Mabinogi and Other Medieval Welsh Tales*, trans. Ford (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), pp. 1–29.
114. Manawydan's patronymic associations connect him with the Irish sea god Lir; on associations of Twryf Uliant with the sea, see Thomson, *Pwyll Pendewic Dyuet*, p. 39, n. 510.
115. See chapter three.
116. Regarding the renown of holy hermits in Wales, see Gerald of Wales, *The Journey through Wales and the Description of Wales*, trans. Lewis Thorpe (Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin, 1978), p. 254; on scholarship in the *clasau* see John Davies, *A History of Wales* (London: Penguin, 1993), p. 99.
117. See Eriugena's commentary on mythological nuptials in Martianus Capella [Jane Chance, *Medieval Mythography: From Roman North Africa to the School of Chartres, A.D. 433–1177* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 1994) pp. 250–99].
118. Derick S. Thomson, ed., *Branwen Uerch Lyr*, ll. 407–408, p. 15; trans. Jones and Jones, *The Mabinogion*, p. 32.
119. John Carey's studies of the Holy Grail highlight via updated scholarship the relation of the mythic figure of Bran to Bron of the Grail legends, which legends developed likewise in a syncretism of Celtic myth and Christian traditions related to the Crucifixion (*Ireland and the Grail*).
120. Augustine of Hippo, *Sermons III/7 (230–272B) on the Liturgical Seasons*, The Works of Saint Augustine, A Translation for the 21st Century, ed. Edmund Hill (New Rochelle, NY: New City Press, 1993), Sermon 263.2, p. 220.
121. This roughly correlates with the phase of *stasis* outlined in the *Amibigua* of Maximus the Confessor [Andrew Louth, *Maximus the Confessor*, Early Church Fathers (London: Routledge, 1996), p. 67].
122. Goodchild, *Deleuze and Guattari*, p. 187.
123. Patrick K. Ford, ed., *Math uab Mathonwy* (Belmont, MA, 1999), pp. 32–33.
124. See Augustinus Hibernicus, *De Mirabilibus sacrae Scripturae*, PL 35, 2149–202; and Francis MacGinty, *The Treatise De Mirabilibus Sacrae Scripturae: Critical Edition, with Introduction, English Translation of the Long Recension and Some Notes*, unpublished doctoral thesis (University College Dublin, 1971). Portions are translated by John Carey in *King of Mysteries: Early Irish Religious Writings* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2000)). For discussion by the "Irish Augustine" of his view of the naturalness of miracles, see especially III.9–10, MacGinty, p. 168, and discussion in John Carey, *A Single Ray of the Sun, Religious Speculation in Early Ireland* (Andover, MA, and Aberystwyth, UK: Celtic Studies Publications, 1999), pp. 50–51.

125. Ford, *Math*, pp. 18–19; lines 662–78 (exclusive of prose lines between the verses).
126. For English translations, see Ford, *Mabinogi*, p. 107; Gwyn Jones and Thomas Jones, trans., *The Mabinogion*, Everyman 168, 1949, rev. (London: J.M. Dent, 1993), pp. 61–62; and Jeffrey Gantz, trans., *The Mabinogion* (London: Penguin, 1976), p. 115.
127. Julia Kristeva, “Dostoevsky, the Writing of Suffering, and Forgiveness,” in *Black Sun, Depression and Melancholia*, trans. Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989), pp. 209–10.
128. Andrew Welsh notes how this destructive magic in the Fourth Branch negatively mirrors more life-affirming themes of what is termed here natural magic in the Fourth Branch, in “Doubling and Incest in the *Mabinogi*,” *Speculum* 65 (1990): 344–62.
129. Ford, *Math*, p. 3, lines 79–80.
130. Olga Sedokova, “The Light of Life,” a talk given at Bucknell University on March 10, 2007, online at <http://intelros.ru/lib/statyi/sedakova3.htm>, section 1.3.
131. Ford, *Math*, pp. 32–33.
132. Green, *Animals in Celtic Life and Myth*, p. 191; “Sinnan,” in *The Metrical Dindshenchas*, vol. 3, pp. 292–95; also “The prose tales in the Rennes Dindshenchas,” p. 457. On trees in early Irish place names, see Kay Muhr, “Trees—Early Traditions and Place Names,” *Iqwas Insight, New Perspectives in Irish Studies*, No. 2, <http://homepage.eircom.net/~archaeology/two/trees.htm#two>.
133. The current definitive edition, translation, and background to the poem is in Marged Haycock, *Legendary Poems from the Book of Taliesin* (Aberystwyth, UK: CMCS, 2007).
134. See Carey, *Ireland and the Grail*, pp. 92–97, 329.
135. Kelly, *Early Irish Farming*, pp. 387–88.
136. Paul C. Bauschatz, *The Well and the Tree, World and Time in Early Germanic Culture* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1982). See also Thomas H. Ohlgren, “The Pagan Iconography of Christian Ideas: Tree-lore in Anglo-Viking England,” *Mediaevistik* I (1988): 145–73.
137. The visit by three angels to Abraham at Mamre in Genesis 18, read as a theophany of the Trinity in early Christian tradition, occurred at an oak, according to the Septuagint.
138. John of Damascus, “Exposition of the Orthodox Faith,” trans. S.D.F. Salmond, in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, second series, vol. 9, 1899 (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1999), pp. 29, 30.
139. Eriugena, *Periphyseon* IV.16, PL 122, 823A–D, trans. Sheldon-Williams with O’Meara, pp. 478–9.
140. Lars Thunberg, *Man and the Cosmos: The Vision of St. Maximus the Confessor* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1997), pp. 138–39.
141. Dumitru Stăniloae, *The World, Creation and Deification, The Experience of God: Orthodox Dogmatic Theology* vol. 2, trans. and ed. Ioan Ionita and Robert Barringer (Brookline, MA: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2000), pp. 176–77.
142. Archbishop Averky Taushev and Seraphim Rose, *The Apocalypse in the Teachings of Ancient Christianity* (Platina, CA: St. Herman of Alaska Press, 1996), p. 112.
143. Common use of a differentiated Welsh term for Wales apart from Britain, the basis of the modern form *Cymru*, apparently had developed relatively late in the early medieval period.

144. Alfred K. Siewers, "Gildas and Glastonbury," in *Via Crucis: Essays on Sources and Ideas in Memory of J.E. Cross*, ed. Thomas Hall (Morgantown, WV: West Virginia University Press, 2002), pp. 423–32; Gildas' text could reflect a tradition similar to medieval accounts of early evangelism of Britain by Joseph of Arimathea and Aristobulus of the Seventy.
145. James McKillop, *A Dictionary of Celtic Mythology* (Oxford, 2004), s.v.; for a syncretic neopagan perspective on early evidence surrounding Lug, see Alexei Kondratiev, "Lugus: The Many-Gifted Lord," republished online from An Tribhis Mhor: The IMBAS Journal of Celtic Reconstructionism 1 (1997), at <http://www.mythicalireland.com/mythology/tuathade/lugus.html>.
146. See Dean A. Miller, "Byzantine Sovereignty and Feminine Potencies," and Michael Azkoul, "Saint Photios and the Filioque," in St. Photios, *On the Mystagogy of the Holy Spirit*, trans. Holy Transfiguration Monastery (Brookline, MA: Studion, 1983), pp. 3–27, at 11, note 36.
147. See Gregory, *Homiliae in Ezechielem Prophetam*, ed. M. Adriaen, Corpus Christianorum Series Latina 142 (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 1971), Homily IV; trans. Theodosia Gray, *The Homilies of Saint Gregory the Great on the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel, in English Translation* (Etna, CA: Center for Traditionalist Orthodox Studies, 1990), pp. 40–46. For a detailed working out of these parallels, see Alfred K. Siewers, "Writing an Icon of the Land: the *Mabinogi* as a Mystagogy of Landscape," *Peritia* 19 (2005): 193–228, from which a portion of this discussion is adapted. In Celtic cultures, a fourfold pattern could resonate with traditions of a quarterly calendar, one of whose main festivals, around May Day, was a point of reference in the First Branch. See Jennifer O'Reilly, "Patristic and Insular Traditions of the Evangelists: Exegesis and Iconography of the Four-Symbols Page," <http://www.ucc.ie/latinbible/oreilly.htm>, third section. Alwyn and Brinley Rees, in *Celtic Heritage*, enumerated fivefold schemes in Celtic lore that they saw as based on four directions plus "here." Fourfold Christian cosmology reached its epitome with Eriugena, whose tetraphalcos cosmic cycle echoed cosmic phases elucidated by one of his sources, Maximus, namely the basis in God the Logos, then *genesis*, *kinesis*, and *stasis* [Joseph P. Farrell, *Free Choice in St. Maximus the Confessor* (South Canaan, PA: St. Tikhon's Seminary Press, 1989), p. 221], reflecting earlier hexaemeral exegeses.
148. Augustine of Hippo, *Sermons III/7 (230–272B) on the Liturgical Seasons*, Sermon 263.2, p. 220.
149. Gillian R. Overing and Marijane Osborn [*Landscape of Desire: Partial Stories of the Medieval Scandinavian World* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), pp. 82–83] refer to the Icelandic tetramorph as meditatively "tantric" symbolism, presumably for uniting self and the visible world.
150. Carey, *Ireland and the Grail*, p. 254.
151. See discussion in Carey, *Ireland and the Grail*, pp. 334–35, and 339–40.
152. John Koch, "A Welsh Window on the Iron Age: Manawydan, Mandubracios," *Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies* 14 (1987): 17–52.
153. Andrew Welsh, "*Manawydan fab Llŷr*: Wales, England and the 'New Man,'" in *The Mabinogion*, ed. C.W. Sullivan (New York: Garland Press, 1996), pp. 121–43.
154. See Siewers, "Gildas and Glastonbury."
155. John Carey, "A British Myth of Origins?" *History of Religions* 31 (1991): 24–38.
156. Carey, *A Single Ray of the Sun*.

157. See again Mark Bonta and John Protevi, "Case Study—Entangled Spaces and Semiotics in Olancho," and Ian Buchanan and Gregg Lambert, eds., *Deleuze and Space*, Deleuze Connections (University of Toronto Press, 2005).
158. For more detailed background based on philological and source studies, see Siewers, "Writing an Icon of the Land: The *Mabinogi* as a Mystagogy of Landscape." The concept of textual iconography will be explored further here in relation to a wider array of early Insular texts in chapters four and five.
159. This effect parallels social theorist Michel de Certeau's focus on landscape that resists monoculture and homogeneity; see his "Walking in the City," in *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), pp. 91–110.

3 Paradise in the Sea: An Early Geography of Desire

1. See I.P. Sheldon-Williams with John J. O'Meara, trans. *Periphyseon (The Division of Nature)*, Cahiers d'études médiévales, Cahier spécial 3 (Montreal: Éditions Bellarmin and Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks, 1987). Major editions of *The Periphyseon* include I. P. Sheldon-Williams and Ludwig Bieler, eds. and trans., Books 1–3, *Scriptores Latini Hiberniae (SLH)* 7, 9, 11; Édouard Jeuneau, ed. and J. J. O'Meara and I.P. Sheldon-Williams, trans., Book 4, *SLH* 13 (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1968–81 and 1995); and Édouard Jeuneau, ed., *Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis* 161–5, 5 vols (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 1996–2003). References to the Latin transcript of Eriugena's work in Migne's *Patrologia Latina (PL)* throughout are to volume 122. Myra L. Uhlfelder, trans., with Jean A. Potter, ed., *Periphyseon, On the Division of Nature*, Library of the Liberal Arts (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1976), offers a partial English translation with interpolated summary.
2. Following Heidegger, the philosopher Edward S. Casey defines landscape as the appearance of "place-world." Casey, "Taking a Glance at the Environment, Preliminary Thoughts on a Promising Topic," in *Eco-Phenomenology, Back to the Earth Itself*, Environmental Philosophy and Ethics, ed. Charles S. Brown and Ted Toadvine (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2003), p. 195 [187–210]. In discussions here of Eriugena, I would like to acknowledge the invaluable help and insights of my student Michael Gibney.
3. Recent scholarship has attributed glosses in early Irish that reference early Irish culture to Eriugena.
4. John Marenbon, *Medieval Philosophy, an Historical and Philosophical Introduction* (London and New York: Routledge, 2007), p. 48.
5. Thomas O'Loughlin, *Journeys on the Edges: The Celtic Tradition*, Traditions of Christian Spirituality (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2000), pp. 78–79, argues for a background of Eriugena's philosophy in a "local theology" of apophaticism in Ireland, standing in an Irish hexameron tradition. The distinctiveness of Eriugena's philosophy in the context of the developing Western Church was recognized in attacks by contemporaries. Many thanks to Marina Smyth for recommending O'Loughlin's work to me.
6. Eriugena, *Periphyseon*, 4.2, *PL* 744A–B; trans. Sheldon-Williams and O'Meara, p. 383.
7. Édouard Jeuneau, "Le Symbolisme de la Mer chez Jean Scot Érigène," in *Études érigéniennes* (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1987), pp. 293–94 [289–296].

8. See discussion of the cloud motif, suggestive of a pre-Eriugenian Irish sense of apophatic theology, in Patricia M. Rumsey, *Sacred Time in Early Christian Ireland* (London: T&T Clark, 2002), pp. 200–202. Rumsey's important study needs to be read in tandem with Wesley Follett's recent work on the *céili Dé*, discussed in chapter six, which questions the modern scholarly dichotomy between "reform" and traditional asceticism in early Irish culture.
9. Eriugena, *Periphyseon* 1.35, PL 479C–D; trans. Sheldon-Williams and O'Meara, p. 70.
10. Athanasius, *The Life of Antony*, trans. Robert C. Gregg (New York: HarperCollins, 2006), 74. A similar expression is found in another famous early ascetic text, by Isaac of Nineveh [*The Ascetical Homilies of Saint Isaac the Syrian*, trans. Holy Transfiguration Monastery (Boston, MA: Holy Transfiguration Monastery, 1984)], Homily 15, p. 85. For a parallel in Columbanus' writings, see *Sancti Columbani Opera*, *Scriptores Latini Hiberniae* 2, ed. G.S.M. Walker (Dublin: Dublin Institute, 1957), 13.2, pp. 118–19.
11. Eriugena, *Periphyseon*, 4.11, PL450C; trans. Sheldon-Williams and O'Meara, p. 36.
12. Luce Irigaray, *Marine Lover of Friedrich Nietzsche*, trans. Gillian C. Gill (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), p. 46.
13. Kay Muhr, "Water Imagery in Early Irish," *Celtica* 23 (1999): 208 [193–210]. In addition, Liam Mac Mathúna's examination of Irish uses of threefold division of the cosmos ("Irish Perceptions of the Cosmos," *Celtica* 23: 174–87), which he sees as pre-Christian in origin, raises a possible identification of that cosmic triad with a figurative type of the Trinity—our Father in heaven, the incarnate Son on earth, and the Holy Spirit in the sea, the later association in terms of waters of baptism and nourishment (and also the aerial waters and their relation to winds and *pneuma*).
14. St. John Climacus, *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*, trans. Archimandrite Lazarus Moore, rev. edn (Brookline, MA: Holy Transfiguration Monastery, 1991). On the association of *apatheia* with an erotic sense of "heaven on earth," see pp. 221–24; on the terminology, see note 3 on p. 5.
15. Eriugena, *Periphyseon* 5.21, PL841B, 841D; trans. Sheldon-Williams, p. 500.
16. Eriugena, *Periphyseon* 4.26, PL858C, 859A; trans. Sheldon-Williams, pp. 520–21.
17. Philip Goodchild, *Deleuze and Guattari: An Introduction to the Politics of Desire*, Theory, Culture & Society (London: SAGE Publications, 1996), pp. 187, 219.
18. See opening chapter on rhizomes in Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus, Capitalism and Schizophrenia* 2, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987).
19. Eriugena, *Periphyseon* 4.16, PL823A–D, trans. Sheldon-Williams with O'Meara, pp. 478–79.
20. Hilary Richardson, "Visual Arts and Society," in Dáibhí Ó Cróinín, ed., *A New History of Ireland I, Prehistoric and Early Ireland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 691 [680–713].
21. For a helpful brief definition of *nous* with patristic references, see Elder Ephraim, *Counsels from the Holy Mountain, Selected from the Letters and Homilies of Elder Ephraim*, trans. and ed. St. Anthony's Monastery (Florence, AZ: St. Anthony's Monastery, 1999), p. 430.
22. This follows Kallistos Ware's explication of the patristic meaning of the Greek and Latin terms for obedience in "How to Read the Bible," in *The Orthodox Study Bible*, ed. St. Athanasius Academy of Orthodox Theology (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2008), pp. 1757–60.

23. Eriugena, *Periphyseon* 4.26, PL858B–860A, trans. Sheldon-Williams with O'Meara, pp. 520–21.
24. Eriugena, *Periphyseon* 5.24, PL 122, 851A, 851B, trans. Sheldon-Williams, p. 511.
25. Cú Chuimne, "Cantemus in omni die," in *Iona: The Earliest Poetry of a Celtic Monastery*, trans. and ed. Thomas Owen Clancy and Gilbert Markus (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1995), pp. 182–83.
26. Anthony Winterbourne, *When the Norns Have Spoken: Time and Fate in Germanic Paganism* (Madison and Teaneck, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2004).
27. Eriugena, *Periphyseon* 5.2, PL862D, trans. Sheldon-Williams with O'Meara, pp. 525–26; bracketed phrases are added for interpretive background.
28. Eriugena, *Periphyseon* 4.26, PL857B–D, trans. Sheldon-Williams with O'Meara, p. 519.
29. Dermot Moran, *The Philosophy of John Scottus Eriugena, A Study of Idealism in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 259–60.
30. David Wood, "What is Eco-Phenomenology?" in *Eco-Phenomenology, Back to the Earth Itself*, Environmental Philosophy and Ethics, ed. Charles S. Brown and Ted Toadvine (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press), p. 221 [211–33].
31. Eriugena, *Periphyseon* 1.11, PL451B, 454C, trans. Myra L. Uhlfelder, *Periphyseon: On the Division of Nature*, Library of the Liberal Arts 157 (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1976), pp. 13 and 17.
32. Maximus the Confessor, *Ambigua* 22, PG 91, 1257AB, translated by Joseph P. Farrell in *Free Choice in St. Maximus the Confessor*, p. 181.
33. Eriugena, *Periphyseon* 4.9, PL780B–C, trans. Sheldon-Williams and O'Meara, pp. 428–29.
34. Evan Thompson, *Mind in Life: Biology, Phenomenology, and the Sciences of Mind* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap-Harvard University Press, 2007), pp. 406–407.
35. Following Erwin Panofsky's notion of "deep iconography," see Denis Cosgrove and Stephen Daniels, "Introduction: Iconography and Landscape," in *Iconography of Landscape: Essays on the Symbolic Representation, Design and Use of Past Environments*, ed. Denis Cosgrove and Stephen Daniels (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 2 [1–10].
36. See Jean-Francois Lyotard, *Lessons on the Analytic of the Sublime: Kant's Critique of Judgment, Sections 23–29*, Crossing Aesthetics Series, trans. Elizabeth Rottenberg (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 1994). Writers in the so-called Radical Orthodoxy movement, advocating a "postmodern" approach to theology spanning Protestant and Catholic traditions, have found Eriugena's writings relatively inviting, linking them to their interest in Deleuze's work and a sense of sacramentalism in religious practice in which "the zone of immanence is invested with transcendence, not as a kind of container for an ethereal substance, but rather as a structure of phenomenological reference to an origin that is not itself subject to temporal conditions (or even 'being')." James K.A. Smith, *Introducing Radical Orthodoxy: Mapping a Post-secular Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic/Paternoster Press, 2004), p. 220. Yet the emphasis of Radical Orthodoxy on Thomas Aquinas' cosmology of *analogia* leads it ultimately away from the empirical experientiality of the early Irish Sea, for which Scholasticism became more an erasure than a continuity.
37. Wood, "What is Eco-Phenomenology?" in *Eco-Phenomenology*, p. 215 and 223 [211–33].

38. See discussion of Maximus' views of *logoi*, foundational to Eriugena's sense of "primordial causes," in an environmental context in John Chryssavgis, *Beyond the Shattered Image* (Minneapolis, MN: Light & Life Publishing, 1999), p. 57. Also Vladimir Lossky, *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church*, trans. Fellowship of St. Alban and St. Sergius (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2002), pp. 98–99.
39. See Chryssavgis, *Beyond the Shattered Image*, pp. 81–83; and Lossky, *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church*, p. 96; both express qualified appreciation for this aspect of Eriugena's work as reflecting patristic views, but also lack a contextualized understanding of his approach in relation to early Irish Sea culture.
40. St. Athanasius Academy Septuagint, in *The Orthodox Study Bible* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2008).
41. Eriugena, *Periphyseon* 2.21, PL560A, trans. Sheldon-Williams, p. 162.
42. Eriugena, *Periphyseon* 3.29, PL705D–706C, trans. Sheldon-Williams, pp. 336–37. See also *Periphyseon* 4.2, PL744C, trans. Sheldon-Williams, p. 384. A case of the part being referred to by the whole, as cited by Eriugena, is described at *Periphyseon* 4.26, PL859C, trans. Sheldon-Williams, p. 521.
43. Augustinus Hibernicus, *De Mirabilibus Sacrae Scripturae*, PL35.2149–202, at 2.11, PL35.2179. The passage is translated and discussed in Marina Smyth, "The Body, Death, and Resurrection: Perspectives of an Early Irish Theologian," *Speculum* 83 (2008): 545–46 [531–71]. Regarding bodily metonymy, see pp. 543–44.
44. Eriugena, *Periphyseon* 1.5, PL 445B, trans. Myra L. Uhlfelder.
45. Eriugena, *Periphyseon* 1.37, PL 480B, trans. Sheldon-Williams with O'Meara, *Periphyseon*, p. 71.
46. See Suzanne Conklin Akbari, *Seeing through the Veil: Optical Theory and Medieval Allegory* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 2004), p. 16; see also *The Etymologies of Isidore of Seville*, trans. Stephen A. Barney, W.J. Lewis, J.A. Beach, and Oliver Berghof (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); and John Henderson, *The Medieval World of Isidore of Seville* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).
47. Luce Irigaray, *The Forgetting of Air in Martin Heidegger*, Constructs, trans. Mary Beth Mader (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1999); and *Marine Lover of Friedrich Nietzsche*. For a helpful explication of Irigaray's views on Heidegger, in relation to premodern philosophy, see Katrin Froese, *Nietzsche, Heidegger, and Daoist Thought: Crossing Paths* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2006), pp. 194–96.
48. Luce Irigaray, "The Way of Breath," in *Between East and West*, European Perspectives, trans. Stephen Pluhacek (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), pp. 73–91.
49. Irigaray, *The Forgetting of Air in Martin Heidegger*, p. 128.
50. Luce Irigaray, *An Ethics of Sexual Difference*, trans. Carolyn Burke and Gillian Gillian (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993), p. 48.
51. *Ibid.*, p. 48.
52. Irigaray, *The Forgetting of Air in Martin Heidegger*, p. 72.
53. *Ibid.*, p. 178.
54. On Irigaray's view of the Virgin Mary and Eve, see her "The Way of Breath."
55. Marina Smyth, "The Physical World in Seventh-Century Hiberno-Latin Text," *Peritia* 5 (1986): 214 [201–34], speaking of Augustine's *rationes seminales* in the *De genesis*: "Very roughly, one could think of this interesting offshoot of the Stoic *spermatikoi logoi* as a sort of computer programme for the properties, and eventually the reproduction, of each creature."

56. See Lossky, *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church*, p. 96.
57. On “identity theory” versus “energy theory,” see Duncan Reid, *Energies of the Spirit: Trinitarian Models in Eastern Orthodox and Western Theology* (Atlanta, GA: American Academy of Religion, 1997). This is discussed further here in the next chapter as well.
58. See Augustine, *De Trinitate*, II.5 and II.7.1, in *The Trinity*, The Works of Saint Augustine, A translation for the twenty-first century, trans. Edmund Hill (Brooklyn, NY: New City Press, 1991), pp. 113–16, 120. Gregory of Nyssa, *The Life of Moses*, II.19–26, Classics of Western Spirituality, trans. Abraham J. Mahlherbe and Everett Ferguson (New York, 1978), pp. 59–61; and Augustinus Hibernicus, *De Mirabilibus*, I.16, trans. MacGinty, p. 50a.
59. See comments on Eriugena and Augustine in Lossky, *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church*, 1944, trans. Fellowship of St. Alban and St. Sergius (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1976), p. 96.
60. Eriugena, *Periphyseon*, 3.8, PL 640C–D. The teacher in Eriugena’s voluminous dialogue is here claiming to be synthesizing Augustine, though as usual with a twist; trans. Sheldon-Williams with O’Meara, p. 259.
61. On intuitive patristic writing style, see John McGuckin, *Saint Cyril of Alexandria and the Christological Controversy* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2004), p. 143.
62. John Carey, *A Single Ray of the Sun, Religious Speculation in Early Ireland* (Aberystwyth, UK: Celtic Studies Publications, 1999), p. 50; see there also note 11 on p. 49.
63. Augustinus Hibernicus, *De Mirabilibus Sacrae Scripturae*, and Francis MacGinty, “The Treatise *De Mirabilibus Sacrae Scripturae*: Critical Edition, with Introduction, English Translation of the Long Recension and Some Notes,” unpublished doctoral thesis (University College Dublin, 1971), portions of which are translated by John Carey in *King of Mysteries* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2000). For discussion by the “Irish Augustine” of his view of the naturalness of miracles, see especially III.9–10; MacGinty, p. 168; and discussion in Carey, *A Single Ray of the Sun*, pp. 50–51. Marina Smyth, by contrast with Carey, earlier emphasized Augustinus Hibernicus’ reflection of Augustine of Hippo’s views, based on his use of similar terminology, although Carey’s interpretation captures more fully the Irish Sea recontextualization of that terminology. See Smyth’s *Understanding the Universe in Seventh-Century Ireland*, Studies in Celtic History (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell Press, 1996).
64. In the title of his essay on Augustinus Hibernicus in *A Single Ray of the Sun*.
65. For an edition of the homily, see Édouard Jeanneau, ed., *Jean Scot: L’Homelie sur le Prologue de Jean*, Sources Chrétiennes 151 (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1969), with an English translation in *Celtic Spirituality*, Classics of Western Spirituality, ed. Oliver Davies (New York: Paulist Press), pp. 411–32; and in John Joseph O’Mara, *Eriugena* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), pp. 155–76; the translation here is from Christopher Bamford, *The Voice of the Eagle, the Heart of Celtic Christianity, John Scotus Eriugena’s Homily on the Prologue to the Gospel of St. John*, rev. edn (Barrington, MA: Lindisfarne Books, 2000), pp. 86–87.
66. McGuckin, *St. Cyril of Alexandria and the Christological Controversy*, p. 225. On self-realization in deep ecology, see Aarne Naess, *Ecology, Community and Lifestyle: Outline of an Ecosophy*, rev. edn, with David Rothenberg (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).
67. See Dermot Moran, *Introduction to Phenomenology* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), p. 431. Moran’s explications of phenomenology have the

- virtue, from the point of view of this study, of coming from his background as an Eriugenist. "I love therefore I am" coincidentally is the title of a book on the life of Sophrony Sakharov, an ascetic in the desert tradition referenced in chapter one: Nicholas V. Sakharov, *I Love Therefore I Am: The Theological Legacy of Archimandrite Sophrony* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary, 2003).
68. Christopher Bamford, trans., *The Voice of the Eagle*, pp. 88–89, 93, 101.
 69. Using "inculturated" as a term from conversion-mission theory, referring to the intradimensional growth of faith tradition within an indigenous culture's own traditions.
 70. Francesco Benozzo, *Landscape Perception in Early Celtic Literature*, Celtic Studies Publications 8 (Aberystwyth: Celtic Studies Publications, 2004), p. 76.
 71. Evidence for continuity between Romano-British sites (including villas) and Christianity is circumstantial but suggestive, including artifacts and sometimes explicit art designs, as well as the ambiguous proximity between the Llantwit Major villa site and the reputedly post-Roman Christian center of Llanilltud Fawr in southeastern Wales. Overviews of some of the evidence and issues involved in transitions and continuities between late Roman Britain and early medieval Christian British realms include Dorothy Watts, *Christians and Pagans in Roman Britain* (London: Routledge, 1991); *Religion in Late Roman Britain: Forces of Change* (London: Routledge, 1998); Richard Morris, *The Church in British Archaeology*, Council for British Archaeology Research Report 47 (London: Council for British Archaeology, 1983); and Kenneth Dark, *Civitas to Kingdom* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1999). See also Alfred K. Siewers, "'A Cloud of Witnesses': The Origins of Glastonbury Abbey in the Context of Early Christianity in Western Britain," unpublished MA thesis (Aberystwyth: University of Wales, 1994).
 72. O'Loughlin, *Journeys on the Edges*, pp. 78–79.
 73. There is a "step" devoted to this sense of exile in St. John Climacus' *The Ladder of Divine Ascent* (ca. 600 from the Sinai Desert), pp. 14–20. In modern Greek the term is used often to convey meanings of "diaspora" as well as "pilgrimage."
 74. See, e.g., Máire Herbert, "Becoming an Exile: Colum Cille in Middle-Irish Poetry," in *Heroic Poets and Poetic Heroes in Celtic Tradition, a Festschrift for Patrick K. Ford*, CSANA Yearbook 3–4, ed. Joseph Falaky Nagy and Leslie Ellen Jones (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2005), p. 134 [131–40].
 75. Philip Sheldrake, *Spaces for the Sacred: Place, Memory and Identity* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), pp. 43–44: "A miracle, therefore, explains God's world as an integrity because it reveals it all at once..."
 76. See, e.g., Proinsias Mac Cana, *Celtic Mythology* (New York: Hamlyn, 1970); and "Aspects of the Theme of King and Goddess in Irish Literature," *Études Celtiques* 7 (1955–56): 76–114, 356–413, and 8 (1958–59): 59–65.
 77. Alwyn Rees and Brinley Rees, *Celtic Heritage, Ancient Tradition in Ireland and Wales* (New York: Grove Press, 1961); see especially pp. 121, 123, 133, and, on Wales, chapter eight.
 78. O'Loughlin, *Journeys on the Edges*, pp. 72–73. While this book is more a popular treatment for a Catholic religious press, it crystallizes O'Loughlin's extensive scholarship. Here and elsewhere in discussion of the *Liber de Ordine*, I am grateful in particular for my former student Marcus Ladd's study of the original and shared insights.
 79. Benozzo, *Landscape Perception*, p. 30. See also my review in *Cambrian Medieval Celtic Studies* 52 (2006): 100–101.

80. Patrick Sims-Williams, "Some Celtic Otherworld Terms," in *Celtic Language, Celtic Culture, A Festschrift for Eric P. Hamp*, ed. A.T.E. Matonis and Daniel F. Melia (Belmont, MA: Ford & Bailie, 1990), p. 67 [57–81].
81. *Ibid.*, pp. 60–61; emphasis in the original.
82. *Ibid.*, p. 63.
83. See the useful summary and discussion of these traditions in Rees and Rees, *Celtic Heritage*, pp. 38–39.
84. Garrett Olmsted, *The Gods of the Celts and the Indo-Europeans*, Archaeolingua 6 (Budapest: Archaeolingua Alapítvány, 1994). Even though Olmsted's work to reconstruct a pantheon may be reductive, his study is the most extensive into possible structures of pre-Christian Celtic beliefs and extremely helpful.
85. Kim McCone, *Pagan Past and Christian Present in Early Irish Literature* (Maynooth: An Sagart, 1990).
86. Carey, "The Irish 'Otherworld': Hiberno-Latin Perspectives," p. 158. Sims-Williams himself again notes the possible derivation of the Welsh term *Annwfn*, used for the Otherworld in the *Mabinogi*, from the meaning "Not-World" or "Inner World" ("Some Celtic Otherworld Terms," 62).
87. Carey, *A Single Ray of the Sun*. See also the introductory material and notes to his anthology, *King of Mysteries: Early Irish Religious Writings* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2000).
88. Ann Dooley, *Playing the Hero: Reading the Irish Saga Táin Bó Cúailnge* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006).
89. M. O'Daly, *Cath Maige Mucrama*, Irish Texts Society 50 (Dublin: Irish Texts Society, 1975), p. 48.
90. Carey, *Single Ray of the Sun*, p. 19; see also his "Tara and the Supernatural," in *The Kingship and Landscape of Tara*, ed. Edel Bhreathnach (Dublin: Four Courts Press for The Discovery Programme, 2005), pp. 32–48.
91. Kim McCone, *Echtrae Chonnlaí and the Beginnings of Vernacular Narrative Writing in Ireland: A Critical Edition with Introduction, Notes, Bibliography and Vocabulary*. (Maynooth: Department of Old and Middle Irish National University of Ireland, 2000), p. 104.
92. John Carey, "The Rhetoric of *Echtrae Chonnlaí*," *Cambrian Medieval Celtic Studies* 30 (1995): 64–65 [41–65].
93. Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*.
94. John Carey, "Time, Space, and the Otherworld," *Proceedings of the Harvard Celtic Colloquium* 17 (1987): 13–15.
95. *Ibid.*, p. 15.
96. Eriugena was described by early medieval critics as holding to the view that the Eucharist was symbolic rather than real. His writing on the topic did not survive and it is likely, given the patristic and iconographic contexts of his work, that his view reflected a synergetic sense of symbolism rather than the developing objectified view of Transubstantiation in the West, in which categories of the symbolic and real became separate.
97. On the report of the Kievans at the Hagia Sophia from the *Russian Primary Chronicle*, see Timothy Ware, *The Orthodox Church*, rev. edn (Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin, 1983); on the church at Kildare, see Cogitosus, *Vita S. Brigitae*, trans. Liam de Paor, *Saint Patrick's World: The Christian Culture of Ireland's Apostolic Age* (Notre Dame, IN: Notre Dame University Press, 1997), p. 222 [207–224].
98. Anthony Ugolnik, *The Illuminating Icon* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1989), p. 49.

99. Ibid., p. 58.
100. Christopher Tilley, *A Phenomenology of Landscape: Places, Paths and Monuments* (Oxford and Providence, RI: Berg, 2004), p. 202.
101. Ibid., p. 109.
102. Roy Rappaport, *Ritual and Religion in the Making of Humanity*, Cambridge Studies in Social and Cultural Anthropology (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 459. See also p. 210.
103. Roy Rappaport, "Ritual Regulation of Environmental Relations," in *Ecology, Meaning, and Religion* (Berkeley, CA: North Atlantic Books, 1979), p. 41 [27–42].
104. Sheldrake, *Spaces for the Sacred*, p. 22. See also his helpful but impressionistic *Living between Worlds: Places and Journeys in Celtic Spirituality* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1995).
105. On Duns Scotus, see Edward S. Casey, *The Fate of Place, A Philosophical History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), pp. 105, 109; and Pierre Duhem, *Medieval Cosmology: Theories of Infinity, Place, Time, Void, and the Plurality of Worlds*, trans. Roger Ariew (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), p. 186.
106. Catherine Bell, *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), pp. 266–67.
107. Douglas Burton-Christie, "The Wild and the Sacred," *American Theological Review* 85.3 (Summer 2003): 493–510.
108. Catherine Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992).
109. Douglas Burton-Christie, "Words beneath the Water: Logos, Cosmos, and the Spirit of Place," in *Christianity and Ecology: Seeking the Well-being of Earth and Humans*, ed. Deter T. Hessel and Rosemary Radford Ruether (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Center for the Study of World Religions/Harvard University Press, 2000), pp. 317–36. He does helpfully discuss views of the *Logos* and *logoi* in Stoic philosophy and in the writings of Origen and Clement of Alexandria.
110. Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice*, pp. 7–8.
111. Ibid., pp. 106–7.
112. Ibid., p. 104.
113. Antonio Sennis, "Narrating Places: Memory and Space in Medieval Monasteries," in *People and Space in the Middle Ages, 300–1300*, Studies in the Early Middle Ages 15, ed. Wendy Davies, Guy Halsall, and Andrew Reynolds (Turnhout, Bel.: Brepols, 2006), p. 294 [275–94].
114. Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. D. Nicholson-Smith (Oxford and Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1992).
115. Sheldrake, *Spaces for the Sacred*, p. 111.
116. Sennis, "Narrating Places," p. 289.
117. Douglas Burton-Christie, *The Word in the Desert, Scripture and the Quest for Holiness in Early Christian Monasticism* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 300; emphasis added. Douglas Burton-Christie's description of "the ultimate expression of the desert hermeneutic" as person is reminiscent of the Deleuze–Guattari sense of desire as productive of the real, in Giles Deleuze's glossing of Foucault's butterfly-like diagramming of "supreme fiction." The two wings "are the two irreducible forms of knowledge, light and language, which capture the thinker in a double movement... The goal of the two movements together is to become both integrated and different... the

- chamber of the fold or fissure is not empty, since one fills it with oneself" [explanation by Michael Payne, *Reading Knowledge: An Introduction to Barthes, Foucault and Althusser* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1997), p. 61]. In the desert ethos that Burton-Christie describes, the whole emerging personhood is itself amid movements that themselves are among larger movements, ecological and cosmic, within which the transfiguring person continues to form amid relations with others.
118. On sacramental-ethical landscape, see Sheldrake, *Spaces for the Sacred*. Sheldrake compares early monastic communities to Michel Foucault's notion of the *heterotopia* (pp. 100–101), and argues that "sacramental-ethical place (despite our various human attempts to regulate and control it) engages a power beyond the ritual enactments themselves to become a space of alternatives that pries open an elitist history to offer an entry point for the oppressed, the marginalized, the excluded. The Eucharistic action, according to its own inner logic, is the most public and also the most catholic space that there is in the contingent world of space and time. There is perpetual and uncomfortable tension between the sacramental practice of reconciled place and all the many efforts of Christians to resist the logic of reconciliation" (pp. 80–81). On potential overlap of spiritual and environmental concerns with spatiality, see Michael E. Zimmerman, "Heidegger's Phenomenology and Contemporary Environmentalism," in *Eco-Phenomenology: Back to the Earth Itself*, ed. Ted Toadvine, SUNY Press Series in Environmental Ethics and Philosophy (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2002), pp. 95–96, and Erika Meyer-Dietrich on narrative as itself ritual performance reflecting and reshaping physical environment ("When Natural Phenomena Enter the Symbolic Sphere: An Ecological Perspective on Ritual Texts within the Egyptian Funerary Cult," *Numen* 51 (2004): 1–19).
 119. Thompson, *Mind in Life*, p. 411.
 120. See *ibid.*, chapters five and six.
 121. *Ibid.*, p. 394.
 122. *Ibid.*, p. 157.
 123. On social systems theory as one aspect of this work, see, in addition to Cary Wolfe's helpful explication of the autopoietic work of Francesco Varela and Humberto Maturana throughout Wolfe's *Animal Rites: American Culture, the Discourse of Species, and Posthumanist Theory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), chapter five of Thompson, *Mind in Life*; and Hans-Georg Moeller, *Luhmann Explained from Souls to Systems*, Ideas Explained 3 (Chicago and La Salle, IL: Open Court, 2006), pp. 12–13. I am grateful for Wolfe's kind discussion of this with me.
 124. See the Forum on Religion and Ecology, an online clearinghouse for the new field of Religion and Ecology, which is being developed by former colleagues John Grim and Mary Evelyn Tucker, to whom I owe a debt of thanks in their encouragement of my work: <http://www.religionandecology.org/>.
 125. Thompson, *Mind in Life*, pp. 180, 167, 192.
 126. *Ibid.*, p. 195.
 127. Focus on complex systems and string theory in different scientific fields is creating revived interest in alternative models of cosmogony and cosmology, with ramifications for views of self. See Paul J. Steinhardt and Neil Turok, *Endless Universe, Beyond the Big Bang* (New York: Doubleday, 2007); and Douglas H. Erwin, "Darwin Still Rules, But Some Biologists Dream of a Paradigm Shift," *The New York Times*, Science section, June 26, 2007, <http://www.nytimes>.

com/2007/06/26/science/26essay.html?em&ex=1183003200&en=ec7150ae6d6fbee2&ei=5087%0A. For discussions of parallels between themes in quantum physics and hesychastic Christian energy theory that reflect aspects of asceticism in the early Irish Sea zone, see Daniel M. Rogich, *Becoming Uncreated: The Journey to Human Authenticity* (Minneapolis: Light and Life Publishing, 1997), pp. 196–97; and Archbishop Lazar Puhalo, *The Evidence of Things Not Seen, Orthodox Christianity and Modern Physics* (Dewdney, BC: Synaxis Press, 1996), but most helpfully (by a physicist) Alexei V. Nesteruk, *Light from the East: Theology, Science, and the Eastern Orthodox Tradition*, Theology and the Sciences (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003). Fritjof Capra has also discussed the potential for Christian traditions to engage in dialogue both with recent developments in physics and with non-Christian Asian religious traditions that he has described as most analogous to the latter. See his *The Tao of Physics, An Exploration of the Parallels between Modern Physics and Eastern Mysticism*, twenty-fifth anniversary rev. edn (Boston: Shambhala, 2000), p. 341. Parallels between Eastern Christian “energy theory” in the desert ascetic tradition and Daoist practice of relevance to Capra’s discussion were explored in Hieromonk Damascene, *Christ the Eternal Tao* (Platina, CA: Valaam Books, 1999), pp. 237–38. Eastern Christian traditions and Daoism had some historical connections through contact in Persia and at the Chinese imperial court in the early medieval period. On contemporary physics, I rely on explications by Michio Kaku in his helpfully accessible *Parallel Worlds, a Journey through Creation, Higher Dimensions, and the Future of the Cosmos* (New York: Doubleday, 2005); and also by Leonard Susskind, *The Cosmic Landscape, String Theory and the Illusion of Intelligent Design* (New York: Little, Brown and Co., 2006). See also Paul Davies, *God and the New Physics* (London: Penguin, 1990). On recent criticism of string theory, see Lee Smolin, *The Trouble with Physics: The Rise of String Theory, the Fall of a Science, and What Comes Next* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2006).

128. See the commentary on and selection from *The Divine Names* by Dionysius, trans. Colm Luibheid, in *Encompassing Nature, A Sourcebook: Nature and Culture from Ancient Times to the Modern World*, ed. Robert M. Torrance (Washington, DC: Counterpoint, 1989), pp. 554–55; also John S. Romanides, *The Ancestral Sin*, trans. George S. Gabriel (Ridgewood, NJ: Zephyr, 2002), throughout, and at p. 7 (in the translator’s preface) regarding the Greek term *amartia* for sin as “missing the mark” or failing to realize full humanity. For Augustine on evil, see G.R. Evans, “Evil,” in *Augustine through the Ages, an Encyclopedia*, ed. Allan D. Fitzgerald and John C. Cavadini (Grand Rapids, MI, and Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans, 1999), pp. 340–44. The Eriugenian synthesis of themes from the Cappadocians, Dionysius, Maximus, and Augustine enables an arguably more contextualized reading of Paul’s statements in Romans 1 about “natural” and in Ephesians 3 regarding the inner or inward man. In both epistle sections, Paul’s discussion is framed by a discussion of man’s relationship to cosmic hierarchies, invisible things, and families of creation. It is in that context of externalized dialogue that both natural and the inner man are defined in readings within the “energy theory” tradition, rather than an Augustinian emphasis on internalized Original Sin and its “inward turn” [as defined in Phillip Cary, *Augustine and the Invention of the Inner Self* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000)]. In a non-Augustinian reading, even the condemnation of sodomy in Romans 1 is not so much akin to later conventional Western views of homosexuality as *identity*, related to supposed essential identification with sin, as it is

- to premodern identification of the natural with external bodily sexual difference and a biblical tradition of reintegrating sexual difference symbolically in marriage.
129. John Chryssavgis, "The World of the Icon and Creation," in *Christianity and Ecology, Seeking the Well-Being of Earth and Humanity*, ed. Dieter T. Hessel and Rosemary Radford Ruether (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Center for the Study of World Religions/Harvard University Press, 2000), pp. 89 and 95, note 15 [83–96]. Chryssavgis notes an Akathist Hymn using a verb related to *chora*: "[She] contained [*choresas*] the One who contains [*chorei*] the universe."
 130. Wendell Berry, "The Idea of a Local Economy," in *In the Presence of Fear, Three Essays for a Changed World*, ed. Berry (Great Barrington, MA: Orion Society, 2001), p. 22 [11–33]. Berry's critique suggests how even posthumanism's dismantling of subjectivity can be complicit in the postmodern "death of nature" that enables global commodification of bodily life. Removing "anthropocentric" frames can enable the equivocality of abstract constructs such as multinational corporations with personhood, while creating intellectual space for an absent-presence regime of theoretical-neocolonial hegemony.
 131. Mikhail Bakhtin noted that "what unfolds . . . is not a world of objects, illuminated and ordered by [the author's] monologic thought, but a world of consciousnesses mutually illuminating one another. . . . Among them Dostoevsky seeks the highest and most authoritative orientation, and he perceives it not as his own true thought, but as another authentic human being and his discourse. The image of the ideal human being or the image of Christ represents for him the resolution of ideological quests. This image or this highest voice must crown the world of voices, must organize and subdue it. Precisely the image of a human being and his voice, a voice not the author's own, was the ultimate artistic criterion for Dostoevsky: not fidelity to his own convictions and not fidelity to convictions themselves taken abstractly, but precisely a fidelity to the authoritative image of a human being." [Quoted and translated by Richard Pevear in the Foreword to his translation (with Larissa Volokhonsky) of Dostoevsky's *Demons* (New York: Vintage Books, 1995), pp. xviii–xix.] The notion of authentic humanity parallels phenomenological concerns; the dialogic frame of authority (identified with a relational as opposed to solipsistic mode) highlights parallels between the Christocentric focus of early medieval texts and the ecocentric focus of environmental literary studies. On Bakhtin's own crypto-Christianity in the Eastern tradition, distantly paralleling some themes in early Irish Sea spirituality, see Charles Lock, "Bakhtin and the Tropes of Orthodoxy," in *Bakhtin and Religion: A Feeling for Faith*, ed. Susan M. Felch and Paul J. Contino (Evanston IL: Northwestern University Press, 2001), pp. 97–119. For Sheldrake's view, see his *Spaces for the Sacred*, pp. 43–44.
 132. Dostoevsky, *Demons*, trans. Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky (New York: Vintage, 1994), p. 145.

4 Colors of the Winds, Landscapes of Creation

1. I am indebted to Dr. Kevin Murray for his sharing this definition in response to an earlier form of this chapter; to it Phillip Bernhardt-House, in kindly reading over this manuscript, thoughtfully added "any color of the sea."
2. E.G. Quin, ed., *Dictionary of the Irish Language*, compact edn (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 1983), s.v.

3. Tatyana Mikhailova, "What Colour was Saint Colum Cille's Eye, or the Meaning of Old Irish *glas*," a paper at the Celtic Studies Congress, Aberystwyth, 2003. I appreciate very much Prof. Mikhailova's sharing of this paper with me.
4. "Byzantine art reverses Greek art by giving such a degree of activity to the background that we no longer know where the background ends and the forms begin": Gilles Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, trans. Daniel W. Smith (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004), p. 103; see discussion on pp. 103–08.
5. A phrase cited by the Russian poet Olga Sedokova in her talk "The Light of Life," given at Bucknell University on March 10, 2007; online at <http://intelros.ru/lib/statyi/sedakova3.htm> [accessed March 10, 2007], section 1.3 "Theological silence." Christian iconodules in the Early Middle Ages termed the iconoclastic movement a persecution of color, identifying color with Christ as Incarnate God [Herbert L. Kessler, *Spiritual Seeing, Picturing God's Invisibility in Medieval Art* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000), p. 56].
6. Dionysius, *De coelesti hierarchia* xii, ed. J.-P. Migne, *Patrologia Graeca* iii.2322CD, trans. John Carey, "In the Kingdom of Hermes," *Temenos Academy Review* 6 (2003): 175 [155–80]. Carey also points out the Dionysian statement of how angels embody "the binding together of extremes through the power of transference" (*De coelesti* xv.8, iii.337B) involves "reflecting the supernal Light onto the mortal plane in a way which I have not seen in any of the Neoplatonists" (pp. 174–75 and note 80).
7. Recent studies suggest that color and language have a symbiotic relationship; see "How grue is your valley? Psychologists are learning more about how color builds language and language builds colour," *The Economist* online, January 18, 2007, http://www.economist.com/science/displaystory.cfm?story_id=8548630 [accessed April 12, 2008]. While the effect of ultraviolet light at high altitudes is one theory about why some languages merge shades of blue and green in color terms, as in Celtic Irish and Welsh languages, neither Wales nor Ireland are at an altitude fitting that theory; the relation of cultures to sea and sky horizons on the sea could be an alternate explanation.
8. See Mary Carruthers, *The Craft of Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 61, and indexed references to *colores* throughout. David C. Lindberg, in *Theories of Vision from Al-Kindi to Kepler* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976), p. 8, discusses related premodern optical theories involving color as catalyst to sight.
9. Dionysius the Areopagite, *The Ecclesiastical Hierarchy* i.5. *Pseudo-Dionysius, the Complete Works*, Classics of Western Spirituality, trans. Colm Luibheid (New York: Paulist Press, 1987), p. 199.
10. Liz James, "Color and Meaning in Byzantium," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 11 (Summer 2003): 223–233, at 232. See also my "The Bluest–Greyest–Greenest Eye: Colours of Martyrdom and Colours of the Winds as Iconographic Landscape," *Cambrian Medieval Celtic Studies* 50 (Winter 2005): 31–66, from which this chapter draws although in significantly altered form.
11. Luce Irigaray, "The Invisible of the Flesh," in *An Ethics of Sexual Difference*, ed. Irigaray, trans. Carolyn Burke and Gillian C. Gill (London and New York: Continuum, 2004), pp. 130–32 [127–53].
12. The edited text can be found in W. Stokes, ed., *Saltair na Rann: A Collection of Early Middle Irish poems* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1883). Gearóid Mac Eoin [in "The Date and Authorship of Saltair na Rann," *Zeitschrift für Celtische Philologie*

- 28 (1960): 51–67, and “Observations on *Saltair na Rann*,” *Zeitschrift für Celtische Philologie* 39 (1982): 1–28] argued that the author of the poem was Airbertach mac Cosse, who in the later tenth century was associated with a monastery in what is now County Cork; Airbertach has also been credited with a geographical poem indicating an interest in topographical poetics [see Thomas Olden, “On the Geography of Ros Ailithir,” *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, second series, 2 (1879–1888): 219–52]. The attribution of *Saltair na Rann* to Airbertach was vigorously opposed by James Carney, who placed it in the late ninth century with later interpolations, attributing the original to an Óengus of Cluain Eidnech in County Laois [see “The Dating of Early Irish Verse Texts, 500–1100,” *Éigse* 19 (1983): 177–216].
13. The section of the text involving the winds seems to have been adapted in prefatory material to the *Senchas Már* legal compendium, the main text of which is possibly from the early eighth century, roughly the same era as the *Cambrai Homily*, which contains the related colors of martyrdom to be discussed further; however, dating is uncertain and the prefatory material is probably of somewhat later composition. See D.A. Binchy, “The Pseudo-Historical Prologue to the *Senchas Már*,” *Studia Celtica*, 10/11 (1975–76), pp. 15–28. Binchy in his edition of the *Corpus Iuris Hibernici*, 6 vols (Dublin: Dublin Institute, 1978), 1:xxiii, categorized the “wind” material from the *Senchas Már* introduction with the Pseudo-historical Prologue, although it is distinct from the opening tale involving St. Patrick most often associated with that title. Regarding issues of dating the material as a whole, see also Kim McCone, “Dubthach Maccu Lugair and a matter of Life and Death in the Pseudo-Historical Prologue to the *Senchas Már*,” *Peritia* 5 (1986): 1–39; also John Carey, “An edition of the Pseudo-Historical Prologue to the *Senchas Már*,” *Ériu* 45 (1994): 1–32. Carey dates the Patrician story of the Pseudo-Historical Prologue to probably the ninth century; see also his *King of Mysteries* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2000), p. 239. The most “complete” introductory material for the *Senchas Már*, including the wind colors and the discussion of the term *senchas* related to them, is found in Binchy’s *Corpus Iuris Hibernici*, II:343–45; from Harleian 432 (the *senchas* discussion, f. 3^b). Carey dates this larger synthesis of introductory material to the tenth or eleventh century (“An Introduction to the Pseudo-Historical Prologue,” p. 3), although he also speculates that the loose conglomeration of material, including the *senchas* discussion, may date more generally to the late Old or early Middle Irish periods (p. 7). See too the not always reliable translation by W.N. Hancock et al., *Ancient Laws of Ireland, Senchus Mor*, 6 vols (Dublin, 1865), 1:37.
 14. The four spirits of the heavens associated later, in an interesting conjunction of cosmology and eschatology, with the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse.
 15. Rolf Baumgarten has noted how the circular description of the winds by name in Isidore of Seville’s *Etymologiae* (influential in early Ireland) derived from Ptolemy’s wind-rose. Isidore drew on Ptolemy also for his description of Ireland’s geographical orientation, which he described as an island as *ab africo in boream*, running according to his wind-names west-south-west to north-north-east. [Rolf Baumgarten, “The Geographical Orientation of Ireland in Isidore and Orosius,” *Peritia* 3 (1984): 189–203]. See also Barbara Obrist, “Wind Diagrams and Medieval Cosmology,” *Speculum* 72 (1997): 33–84.
 16. For reference to sacred colors of the four directions in American Indian tradition, see Linda Hogan, *Solar Storms* (New York: Scribner Paperback, 1995), pp. 87–88. John Carey, in “Cosmology in *Saltair na Rann*,” *Celtica*, 17 (1985): 33–52, discusses

- biblical and other analogues, including the *Vita Sancti Macarii* (PL 73, 420). Colors in Isidore of Seville's description of the rainbow in *De Natura Rerum* (31, 2, PL 83, 1004A) are cited as possible analogues to those of the major winds in the Irish color schema, as are those in the description of directions in hell in the *Cosmographia* of Aethicus Ister, possibly of Irish origin.
17. In this as in following passages, the text is as edited by Stokes, *Saltair na Rann*, 1–2. For English translations on which this rendering draws, see Carey, *The King of Mysteries*, 99–100, and David Greene's unpublished edition, now available from the Dublin Institute of Advanced Studies, School of Celtic Studies, at http://www.celt.dias.ie/publications/online/saltair_na_rann/ [accessed January 13, 2009]. Many thanks to Fergus Kelly and the Dublin Institute for access to Green's manuscript during the writing of this study.
 18. John Carey translates *croda* here, apparently an adjective accompanying *lir*, describing the sea, as “valiant,” and takes it to be linked with *glas*. Vivid, courageous, and bloodthirsty are all other possible meanings for *croda* [*Dictionary of the Irish Language*, compact edn (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 1983), s.v. *cródacht*]. David Greene's glossary list (in the Dublin Institute of Advanced Studies archives) indicates that *croda* is often used in association with descriptions of biblical cruelty and captivity (typologically linked however to redemption through Christ). It is translated here as “powerful” to reflect this range. Thanks again to Fergus Kelly and the Dublin Institute for access to Greene's manuscript.
 19. s.v. *gel* and *bán*, *Dictionary of the Irish Language*.
 20. The wind-color wheel as a whole also reflects one recent digitalized scheme for the manuscript colors used in the Book of Kells (see the color chart at <http://www.bookofkells.com/features.html>); it is highly speculative but stimulating to reflect on possible association of the colors of iconographic book and Creation.
 21. Carey, “Cosmology in *Saltair na Rann*,” p. 38.
 22. Mikhailova, “What Colour was Saint Colum Cille's Eye?”
 23. Handout from “The Three Sails, the Twelve Winds, and the Question of Early Irish Colour Theory,” a paper at the Early Irish seminar, University College Cork, February 25, 2004.
 24. *Lebor Gabála Éirenn*, *The Book of the Taking of Ireland*, Part IV, ed. and trans. R.A. Stewart Macalister, Irish Texts Society 41 (London: Irish Texts Society, 1941), pp. 138–39; this Irish fantasy history (compiled in the twelfth century) describes the Túatha Dé Danann as first living in northern islands, learning there diabolic arts of the devil. Another text also describes the Túatha Dé Danann, while living to the north, as being in touch with the otherworldly people known as Fomoiré, who became in turn enemy invaders of Ireland from across the sea (expressing disruptive aspects of the Otherworld or spiritual realm) during the “Second Battle of Mag Tuired” [*Cath Maíge Tuired*, *The Second Battle of Mag Tuired*, ed. Elizabeth A. Gray, Irish Texts Society 52 (Naas, IR: Irish Texts Society, 1982)]. In the Irish and Welsh languages, north is also aligned in terminology with the “left” side or direction, when facing the East in a Christian (and perhaps also pre-Christian) worship orientation, contrasted with the “right” with certain connotations of “rightness” as in English. “An Old-Irish Homily,” ed. and trans. John Strachan, *Ériu*, 3 (1907): 5 [1–7], identifies hell with cold, wintry, wet qualities, and heaven with qualities of summer.
 25. Gearóid Mac Eoin, “The Date and Authorship of *Saltair na Rann*,” and “Observations on *Saltair na Rann*,” *ZCP* 39 (1982): 1–28, with a possible correlation suggested in Thomas Olden, “On the Geography of Ros Ailithir.”

26. The place name Tech Duinn is found off the Bearra Peninsula in the southwest.
27. Carey, "Cosmology in *Saltair na Rann*," p. 38 and note 12.
28. James Carney, ed. and trans., "The Poems of Blathmac," in *The Poems of Blathmac Son of Cú Brettan, together with the Irish Gospel of Thomas and a Poem on the Virgin Mary* (Dublin: Irish Texts Society, 1964), p. 18 [2–89], stanza 52. The verse is attributed to Blathmac, an eighth-century poet who was son of a probable king of the Fir Roiss sept of the Airgialla, in modern Louth and Monaghan [Aidan Breen, "Blathmac," in *Medieval Ireland, an Encyclopedia*, ed. Seán Duffy (New York: Routledge, 2005), p. 42].
29. Since this was a direction that could include both the probable Romano-British origins of Irish Christianity, together with Rome and Constantinople, it also perhaps included slight identification with *Romanitas*. Of the ecclesiastical factions dubbed *Romani* and *Hibernenses*, the former seemed to have been strongest in the south of the island.
30. Alwyn Rees and Brinley Rees, *Celtic Heritage, Ancient Tradition in Ireland and Wales* (New York: Grove Press, 1961), pp. 123–24.
31. Gildas, *De Excidio Britanniae*, in Gildas, *The Ruin of Britain and Other Works*, Arthurian Period Sources vol. 1, ed. Michael Winterbottom (London: Phillimore, 1978), par. 8, p. 91 [87–145]. On Patrician-related solar references, see T.E. Powell, "Christianity or Solar Monotheism: The Early Religious Beliefs of St. Patrick," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 43 (1992): 531–40.
32. Lebor Gabála Erenn, *The Book of the Taking of Ireland, Part V*, Irish Texts Society 44, ed. R.A. Stewart Macalister (Dublin: Irish Texts Society, 1956); for a summary of the legendary Milesian-Spanish connection, see pp. 2–3. On the probable early-medieval literary connection between Spain and Ireland, see J.N. Hillgarth, "Ireland and Spain in the Seventh Century," *Peritia* 3 (1984): 1–16.
33. Eric Hamp, "Mabinogi and Archaism," *Celtica*, 23 (1999): 104 [96–112].
34. John Carey, "Three Sails," and *A Single Ray of the Sun: Religious Speculation in Early Ireland* (Andover MA and Aberystwyth, UK: Celtic Studies Publications, 1999), pp. 4–5. In this sense, the color for blue should be more like *gorm*, spanning blue and black, as Dr. Carey kindly has noted to me. Yet absent *gorm* on the wind color-wheel, *glas*, with its connotations of blue and gray, could be a Christianized approximation of the same, especially given the possible association between *glas* and *gorm* in relation to the "red-white-blue" color complex of martyrdom. Pádraig P. Ó Néill, "The Background to the *Cambrai Homily*," *Ériu* 32 (1981): 142 [137–47], and the expression *cú glas* for an alien/exile from overseas in Ireland, meaning wolf and suggesting literally as well as figuratively an older darker (otherworldly apophatic?) social association for the term (see Mikhailova, "What Colour was Saint Colum Cille's Eye?"). *Glasfine* is a term for a son of a woman with a *cú glas* or foreigner in exile in Ireland, often a Briton [T.M. Charles-Edwards, *Early Irish and Welsh Kinship* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 550].
35. See John Carey, "The Lough Foyle Colloquy Texts: *Immacaldam Choluim Chille 7 ind Óclaig oc Carrac Eolairg* and *Immacaldam in Druad Brain 7 inna Banfátho Febuil ós Loch Febuil*," *Ériu* 52 (2002): 53–87. Carey ascribes the dialogue to a generally early date, though probably not earlier than the eighth century.
36. Carey, *A Single Ray of the Sun*, p. 7. Early Irish notions of rebirth may likewise have been integrated with Christian worldviews, as perhaps suggested by an ambiguous definition of the term *tuirigin* in *Sanas Cormaic* (c. 900). *Sanas Cormaic*, ed. Kuno Meyer (1913, repr. Lampeter, UK: Llanerch Publishers, 1994), § 1224, p. 106.

37. See Rees and Rees, *Celtic Heritage*, chapters 5 and 7.
38. Thomas Charles-Edwards, "The Social Background to Irish *Peregrinatio*," *Celtica* 11 (1976): 43–59. *Cú* refers to dog or wolf; Phillip Bernhardt-House describes the compound term well (in a personal note) as "sea dog" meaning "from the elsewhere."
39. The text of the Homily can be found in *Thesaurus Palaeohibernicus*, 2 vols, ed. W. Stokes and J. Strachan (Dublin: Dublin Institute, 1975), 2:246–47, edited further by Rudolf Thurneysen, *Old Irish Reader* (Dublin: Dublin Institute, 1968), pp. 35–36, and fairly recently corrected (since Stancliffe's study) by Próinséas Ní Chatháin, "A Reading in the *Cambrai Homily*," *Celtica* 21 (1990): 417. The consensus of the editors is that the text dates from the seventh or early eighth century.
40. Text from Stokes and Strachan, *Thesaurus Palaeohibernicus*, Thurneysen, *Old Irish Reader*, and Próinséas Ní Chatháin, "A Reading in the *Cambrai Homily*," following mainly Thurneysen's editing (p. 36). The translation that follows combines that of Stokes and Strachan with emendations from Stancliffe, Ní Chatháin, and myself.
41. Clare Stancliffe, "Red, White and Blue Martyrdom," in *Ireland in Early Mediaeval Europe: Studies in Memory of Kathleen Hughes*, ed. Dorothy Whitelock and others (Cambridge, UK, and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982), pp. 21–46. *Iacinthus* is the medieval spelling of *hyacinthus*, "blue."
42. Próinséas Ní Chatháin, "A Reading," which corrects "cé rucésa" to read "cení césa."
43. Ó Néill, "The Background to the *Cambrai Homily*," p. 141.
44. *Catéchèses Celtique*, ed. Dom André Wilmart, in *Analecta Reginensia: Extraits des Manuscrits Latins de la Reine Christine Conservés au Vatican*, Studi e Testi, 59, ed. A. Wilmart (Città del Vaticano: Biblioteca apostolica Vaticana, 1935), p. 88, lines 91–97 [29–112].
45. Ó Néill, "The Background to the *Cambrai Homily*," pp. 142–43.
46. *Ibid.*, p. 143; St. Andrew of Caesarea, *Commentary on the Apocalypse*, chapter 67, PG 106; translated in Averky Taushev and Seraphim Rose, *The Apocalypse in the Teachings of Ancient Christianity* (Platina, CA: St. Herman of Alaska Press, 1985), pp. 272–73.
47. Text from W. Bousset, "Evagrius-Studien," in *Apophthegmata Patrum* (Tübingen, Neth.: Mohr, 1923), p. 36, cited in Dumitru Staniloae, *Orthodox Spirituality*, trans. Archimandrite Jerome Newville and Otilia Kloos (South Canaan, PA: St. Tikhon's Seminary Press, 2003), p. 287. Staniloae notes how this passage became a source for other patristic writers.
48. Taushev and Rose, *The Apocalypse in the Teachings of Ancient Christianity*, pp. 272–73.
49. Stancliffe's study did not explicate the association of *glas* with the heavens, which invoked a common motif relating penance and reformation to turning toward heavenly desire (e.g., the Greek scriptural term *metanoia*, "beyond mind").
50. I Cor. 10:1–3, Douay-Rheims.
51. I Thess. 5:16, Douay-Rheims.
52. See also Kay Muhr, "Water Imagery in Early Irish," *Celtica*, 23 (1999): 208 [193–210]. Liam Mac Mathúna's examination of Irish uses threefold division of the cosmos ("Irish Perceptions of the Cosmos," *Celtica* 23: 174–87), which he sees as pre-Christian in origin, raises in the context of the current study the question of possible identification of that cosmic triad with a figurative type of the Trinity—our Father in heaven, the incarnate Son on earth, and the Holy Spirit in the sea, the latter association in terms of baptism and nourishment.

53. For a summary of Augustinus Hibernicus' cosmology, see Francis MacGinty, *The Treatise De Mirabilibus Sacrae Scripturae: Critical Edition, with Introduction, English Translation of the Long Recension and Some Notes*, unpublished doctoral thesis (University College Dublin, 1971), pp. 129–30.
54. For a translation of Basil's influential view of Creation, see Basil, *The Hexaemeron*, trans. Blomfield Jackson, in *Letters and Select Works*, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, second series, vol. 8, 1895 (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1999), pp. 52–107. Thomas O'Loughlin reviews writings by Basil and other church fathers on aerial waters (reading Basil as placing them very near earth, associated with rain), in "Aquae Super Caelos (Gen. 1:6–7): The First Faith-Science Debate?" *Milltown Studies* 29 (1992): 92–114.
55. Augustinus Hibernicus, *De Mirabilibus sacrae Scripturae*, PL 35, 2149–202; portions are translated by Carey in *King of Mysteries. Liber de ordine creaturarum, Un anemimo irlandés. del siglo. VII*, ed. Manuel C. Díaz y Díaz (Santiago de Compostela: Universidad de Santiago de Compostela, 1972) provides an edited text and Spanish translation. Marina Smyth argues that the idea of the aerial waters as the source of the Flood first appeared in these Irish sources: "Isidore and Early Irish Cosmography," *Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies* 14 (1987): 80 [69–102]. The *De Ordine* presented the idea alongside an echo of Basil's cosmology, placing Paradise physically atop the Earth extending to the heavens (as in other medieval cosmographies); X.2–3, Díaz y Díaz, pp. 156–8; IV.1–3, p. 106.
56. See James Carney, "The Earliest Bran Material," reprinted in *The Otherworld Journey in Early Irish Literature*, ed. Jonathan M. Wooding (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2000), pp. 73–90; Máire Herbert, "The Legend of St. Scothíne: Perspectives from Early Christian Ireland," *Studia Hibernica* 31 (2000–2001): 27–35; "The Lough Foyle Colloquy Texts"; and Carey, "Aerial Ships and Underwater Monasteries: The Evolution of a Monastic Marvel," *Proceedings of the Harvard Celtic Colloquium* 12 (1990): 16–28 [in relation to which see also "On 'Ships in the Air' in 749," *Peritia* 14 (2000): 429–30, in which David Woods suggests a possible origin for a story of an aerial ship in a Latin report of green storm clouds]. See also Pamela Hopkins, "The Symbolology of Water in Irish Pseudo-History," *Proceedings of the Harvard Celtic Colloquium* 12 (1990): 80–86, and again Muhr, "Water Imagery." See also discussion in John Carey, *Ireland and the Grail*, Celtic Studies Publications 11 (Aberystwyth, UK: Celtic Studies Publications, 2008).
57. *Dictionary of the Irish Language*, s.v. Aldhelm's use of the Latin term *glaucus* shows a somewhat similar range in Anglo-Latin, and makes it potentially another analogue to *glas*, with *iacinthina*. In Classical Latin, *glaucus* apparently had connotations of reflectivity. Carin Ruff, "Aldhelm's Jewel Tones," in *Anglo-Saxon Styles*, ed. Catherine E. Karkov and George Hardin Brown (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2003), p. 231 [223–38].
58. For a summary of these references, see Colin Ireland, "Penance and Prayer in Water: An Irish Practice in Northumbrian Hagiography," *Cambrian Medieval Celtic Studies* 34 (Winter 1997): 55–66.
59. *Ibid.*, 54–55.
60. *Ibid.*
61. Fergus Kelly, "A Poem in Praise of Columb Cille," *Ériu* 24 (1973): 1–34; *The Golden Treasury of Irish Poetry, AD 600–1200*, ed. David Greene and Frank O'Connor (1967; repr. Dingle, Brandon: 1990), pp. 20–21.
62. Claire Stancliffe, "Red, White and Blue," p. 33.

63. For a brief summary of Cassian's view of penitential therapy and its relation to the Irish penitential tradition, see Thomas O'Loughlin, "Penitentials" in *Medieval Ireland, an Encyclopedia* (New York: Routledge, 2005), pp. 371–72.
64. Columbanus, *Sancti Columbani Opera*, *Scriptores Latini Hiberniae* 2, ed. G.S.M. Walker (Dublin: Dublin Institute, 1957), 13.2, pp. 118–19.
65. Columbanus, *Sancti Columbani Opera*, 8.1, pp. 95–95.
66. Athanasius, *The Life of Antony*, par. 85, in *Athanasius, The Life of St. Antony and the Letter to Marcellinus*, *Classics of Western Spirituality*, trans. Robert Gregg (New York: Paulist Press, 1980), p. 93.
67. Patrick, *Confessio*, chap. 40; *The Book of Letters of Saint Patrick the Bishop*, ed. and trans. D.R. Howlett (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1994), pp. 78–79.
68. Attributed to Macarius, Homily XV.51, in *Fifty Spiritual Homilies of St. Macarius the Egyptian*, *Translations of Christian Literature, Series 1*, trans. A.J. Mason (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1921), cited in Andrew Louth, *The Origins of the Christian Mystical Tradition from Plato to Denys* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), p. 125.
69. See "Life of Brendan of Clonfert," in *Lives of Irish Saints*, ed. and trans. Charles Plummer, 2 vols (1922, repr. Oxford, 1997), vol. 1, pp. 50–51, and p. 62.
70. Adomnán, *Vita Columbae* 1.6; Richard Sharpe has translated it "retreat" [*Life of St. Columba* (London: Penguin, 1995), p. 118]. For a survey of early Irish references to the sea as desert, and as a terrible trial for monastics, see Thomas O'Loughlin, "Living in the Ocean," in *Studies in the Cult of Saint Columba*, ed. Cormac Bourke (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1997), pp. 11–23.
71. Muhr, "Water Imagery."
72. I.14, Sharpe, ed., *Life of St. Columba*, p. 117; Plummer, *Lives*, vol. 1, pp. 64–65.
73. An early patristic reference to aerial demons is in St. Athanasius' *Life of St. Anthony* (Willits, CA: Eastern Orthodox Publications, 1989), p. 41. For the Pauline basis of the motif see Eph. 2.2 and 6.12. Basil also warns of "airy thoughts...light and unstable of mind," in "On the Origin of Humanity, Discourse 1: On That Which is According to the Image," in St. Basil the Great, *On the Human Condition*, trans. Nonna Verna Harrison (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2005), p. 47 [31–48].
74. Acts 1.11.
75. John Carey, translated from the *Saltair*, in *King of Mysteries*, p. 100. Greene in his unpublished translation of the *Saltair* preferred "harmonies" as a translation. For a range of early definitions of *glés*, s.v. *Dictionary of the Irish Language*.
76. On the transformation of Neoplatonic and Hellenic-Jewish *Sophia* and *Logos* into the Christian *Logos*, see Jaroslav Pelikan, *What has Athens to do with Jerusalem? Timaeus and Genesis in Counterpoint* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1998), pp. 91–92.
77. See Édouard Jeuneau, "Pseudo-Dionysius, Gregory of Nyssa, and Maximus the Confessor in the Works of John Scottus Eriugena," in *Études Érigéniennes*, ed. Jeuneau (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1987), pp. 175–87.
78. Maximus the Confessor, *Ambigua* 22, PG 91, 1257AB, translated by Joseph P. Farrell in *Free Choice in St. Maximus the Confessor* (South Canaan, PA: St. Tikhon's Seminary Press, 1989), p. 181.
79. *Dictionary of the Irish Language*, s.v. *Dligid* in early Irish has also been translated as "right, entitlement, obligation"; e.g., T.M. Charles-Edwards, "Early Irish Law," in *A New History of Ireland I, Prehistoric and Early Ireland*, ed. Dáibhí Ó Cróinín (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 367 [331–70].

80. Daniel A. Binchy, *Corpus Iuris*, 2:345; Hancock, *Ancient Laws of Ireland*, 1:37.
81. See Farrell, *Free Choice*, pp. 195–228.
82. See Jane Stevenson, “Altus Prosator,” *Celtica* 23 (1999): 326–68. Stevenson dates the poem to the late seventh century.
83. *Ibid.*, pp. 353–54. Alan Orr Anderson and Marjorie Ogilvie Anderson, eds., *Adomnán’s Life of Columba*, Oxford Medieval Texts, rev. edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), p. xxxvi.
84. *Pseudo-Dionysius, the Complete Works*, Classics of Western Spirituality, trans. Colm Luibheid (New York: Paulist Press, 1987), pp. 187–88.
85. While the *Libri Carolini* responded to a mistranslation of Greek conciliar statements, its emphases marked an aesthetic disaffection of West from East. On Dungal, see C. Leonardi, “Gli irlandesi in Italia: Dungal e la controversia iconoclastica,” in *Die Iren und Europa im früheren Mittelalter*, Veröffentlichungen des Europa Zentrums Tübingen, ed. H. Löwe, 2 vols (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1982), 2: 746–57.
86. I.22, p. 65, of Francis MacGinty’s edition and translation of the long recension of *De Mirabilibus*.
87. III.9–10; Francis MacGinty edition, p. 168.
88. See Carey, *A Single Ray*, pp. 50–51, in which he explains this interpretive difference from Marina Smyth, who *contra* Carey sees the Irish Augustine’s cosmology in its deep structure as a lacuna-laden imitation of the African doctor, based probably on an incomplete source text [*Understanding the Universe in Seventh-Century Ireland*, Studies in Celtic History 15 (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell Press, 1996), pp. 44–45].
89. Augustine’s terms included *rationes*, *aeternae rationes*, *superiores rationes*, for eternal reasons, and *causales rationes*, *rationes seminales*, *causae*, *rationes*, *rationes primordiales* for causal reasons.
90. For an index to these terms, see St. Augustine, *the Literal Meaning of Genesis*, vol. 1, Ancient Christian Writers 41, translated by John Hammond Taylor (New York: Newman Press, 1982), p. 253, note 67.
91. Marina Smyth, “The Physical World in Seventh-Century Hiberno-Latin Text,” *Peritia* 5 (1986): 214 [201–34], speaking of Augustine’s *rationes seminales* in the *De genesi*: “Very roughly, one could think of this interesting offshoot of the Stoic *spermatikoi logoi* as a sort of computer programme for the properties, and eventually the reproduction, of each creature.” Eriugena uses the term *ratio* in terms of “‘causes’ of the places we now experience” [L. Michael Harrington, *Sacred Place in Early Medieval Neoplatonism*, The New Middle Ages (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), p. 150] in his *Periphyseon* (V; PL 122, 888B, 906A; trans. Sheldon-Williams with O’Meara, *Periphyseon (The Division of Nature)*, Cahiers d’études médiévales, Cahier spécial 3 (Montreal: Éditions Bellarmin and Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks, 1987), p. 556 and 576]. This is part of his overall description of the world as a series of theophanies in which God is directly though not essentially revealed (III; PL 122, 683A–B; trans. Sheldon-Williams and O’Meara, 310). An example of a contrasting Greek patristic viewpoint to the Augustinian “double creation” emphasis can be found in the two homilies now believed to be Basil’s unfinished additions to his *Hexaemeron*: Harrison, *On the Human Condition*, pp. 31–64.
92. Eriugena, *Periphyseon*, III.9, PL 642A, trans. Sheldon-Williams with O’Meara (Montreal, 1987), p. 260.
93. Eriugena, *Periphyseon*, III.8, PL 640C–D. The teacher is here claiming to be synthesizing Augustine, though as usual with a twist; trans. Sheldon-Williams and O’Meara, p. 259.

94. Eriugena, *Periphyseon*, III.3, PL 630B–C; translated by Sheldon-Williams and O'Meara, pp. 246–47.
95. See *Periphyseon*, III.18–40; the differences from Augustine's emphasis on a double creation narrative hinging on Eriugena's stress on the theophanic nature of creation.
96. See Luigi Alici's discussion of Augustine's sea imagery in "Sign and Language," in *Augustine, De Doctrina Christiana*, The Works of St. Augustine: a Translation for the 21st Century, trans. Edmund Hill (Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 1996), pp. 28–29 [28–53]; Gregory in his *Moralia in Job*, XVII.21, on Job 26.5 (*Morals on the Book of Job by S. Gregory the Great*, A Library of Fathers of the Holy Catholic Church, 3 vols., trans. John Henry Parker, 2:299), and also discussion in Édouard Jeuneau, "Le Symbolisme de la Mer chez Jean Scot Érigène," in *Études érigéniennes* (Paris, Études Augustiniennes, 1987), pp. 293–94 [289–296]. Ambrose compares man to a fish in his *Hexameron* exegesis (6.15), and the gospel to a sea (7.17), and gives an idyllic description of the sea as refuge while describing the story of Jonah (11.24); see *Saint Ambrose: Hexameron, Paradise, and Cain and Abel*, The Fathers of the Church, vol. 42, trans. John J. Savage (New York: Fathers of the Church, 1961). Augustine, who saw the biblical waters primarily in figurative terms, emphasized in his hermeneutics the understanding of Christ through the Scriptures, whereas Maximus exemplified understanding the Scriptures through Christ (and beyond the Scriptures, created nature); see Thomas Finan, "St. Augustine on the "mira profunditas" of Scripture," in *Scriptural Interpretation in the Fathers: Letter and Spirit*, ed. Finan and Vincent Twomey (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1995), p. 168 [163–199]; and Nicholas Madden, "Maximus Confessor," in the same collection, p. 141 [119–41]. For Columbanus on the sea as analogous to the mystery of the Trinity, see *Sancti Columbani Opera*, 1.4, p. 65.
97. Alici, "Sign and Language," pp. 28–29.
98. Ephrem the Syrian, *Hymns on Paradise*, trans. Sebastian Brock (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1997), 54; Hymn 1.6–7, pp. 79–80. The fourth-century Syrian "proto-monasticism" of which Ephrem was likely a part shows some analogues to the large monastic communities of early Ireland in their inclusion of "monastic laity," who for Stancliffe formed a demographic basis for the concept of *glasmartré*. For discussion on Syrian proto-monasticism, with its emphasis on "interpenetration of the physical and the spiritual worlds," see Sebastian Brock, ed., *The Syriac Fathers on Prayer and the Spiritual Life* (Kalamazoo MI: Cistercian Publications, 1987), pp. xxi–xxxii.
99. Written perhaps as early as ca. 800, see *Navigatio Sancti Brendani Abbatis*, ed. Carl Selmer (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1959). The building of the boat is related in chapter four, trans. John J. O'Meara, *The Voyage of Saint Brendan: Journey to the Promised Land* (1976, repr. Mountrath and New York, 1982), p. 8.
100. Gregory of Sinai, *Discourse on the Transfiguration*, ed. David Balfour (Athens: Theologia, 1982), pp. 44–45.
101. Columbanus, Sermon 11; trans. Oliver Davies, *Celtic Spirituality*, p. 358.
102. Clancy and Markus, *Iona*, p. 201.
103. From the eleventh-century manuscript *Lebor na hUidre*, though probably an earlier text. R.I. Best and O.J. Bergin, eds., *Lebor na hUidre: Book of the Dun Cow* (Dublin, 1929), ll. 307–310. Trans. Gerard Murphy, *Early Irish Lyrics* (1956; repr. Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1998), p. 65.

104. Mikhailova, "What Colour was Saint Colum Cille's Eye."
105. Staniloae, *Orthodox Spirituality*, p. 209. Basil of Caesarea used similar terminology in Greek; see chapter nine of his *On the Holy Spirit*, SC 17 bis, second edn, pp. 326–28; trans Harrison in *On the Human Condition*, pp. 20–21.
106. Brock, ed., *The Syriac Fathers on Prayer and the Spiritual Life*, p. xxviii.
107. St. Ephrem, *Hymns on the Church*, XXIX.9, trans. Sebastian Brock, *The Luminous Eye: The Spiritual World Vision of St. Ephrem* (Rome: C.I.I.S., 1985), pp. 52–60.
108. See chapter six.
109. For potential parallel aspects of Byzantine and Irish Sovereignty, see Dean A. Miller, "Byzantine Sovereignities and Feminine Potencies," in *Women and Sovereignty*, ed. Louise Olga Fradenburg (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1992), pp. 250–63. Also see the perhaps seventh-century Irish "Ultán's Hymn," in which St. Brigit, whose traditions seem to relate to those of the pre-Christian fertility goddess Brig, is called Jesus' mother, reflecting traditions of Brigit as Jesus' nurse (Stokes and Strachan, *Thesaurus Palaeohibernicus*, 2:323–26). Devotions to Mary from early Insular contexts are distinctively early for surviving evidence, and include some of the first extant visual depictions of Mary, in the Book of Kells and in St. Martin's Cross at Iona and St. Cuthbert's Coffin from Lindisfarne. Ann Buckley, "Music in Ireland to c. 1500," in *A New History of Ireland I, Prehistoric and Early Ireland* ed. Dáibhí Ó Cróinín (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 781 and note 98 [744–813]; Michael O'Carroll, "Our Lady in Early Medieval Ireland," in *Seanchas, Studies in Early and Medieval Irish Archaeology, History and Literature in Honour of Francis J. Byrne*, ed. Alfred P. Smyth (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2000), p. 181 [178–181].
110. John Chrysostom, *Homilies on the Epistle to the Hebrews*, par. 3; trans. Frederic Gardiner, in *Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, First Series 14. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1978), pp. 419.
111. Augustine, *In Iohannis epistulam ad Parthos Tractatus*, 2.10; trans. James Innes, in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, First Series 7 (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1974), p. 473.
112. Carey, "Aerial Ships and Underwater Monasteries"; Woods, "On 'Ships in the Air'"; Micael Ross, "Anchors in a Three-Decker World," *Folklore* 109 (1998): 63–75.

5 A Cosmic Imaginarium

For recent discussion on the river episode mentioned in the caption for the figure at the start of the chapter, however, see Joseph F. Nagy, "The Rising of the *Cronn* River in the *Táin Bó Cúailgne*," in *Celtica Helsingiensia. Proceedings from a Symposium on Celtic Studies*, Commentationes Humanarum Litterarum 107, ed. Anders Ahlqvist et al. (Helsinki: Societas Scientiarum Fennica, 1996), pp. 129–48. Thanks to Phillip Bernhardt-House for this reference.

1. Francesco Benozzo, *Landscape Perception in Early Celtic Literature* (Aberystwyth, UK: Celtic Studies Publications, 2004), pp. 145–46.
2. Thomas Kinsella, trans., *The Táin* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970), p. xiii.
3. Benozzo, *Landscape Perception in Early Celtic Literature*, p. 185. Metonymy retains paradoxical identification, an intertwining of discontinuity and continuity, Eelco Runia notes in "Presence," *History and Theory* 45 (2006): 1 [1–29]. Early

medieval Christian iconography provides a model for “framing” the visual experience of such metonymy across boundaries of image and word, in a way that emphasizes Runia’s “absence of presence” with a “partial but meaningful presence” nonetheless [Glenn Peers, *Sacred Shock, Framing Visual Experience in Byzantium* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2004), p. 2]. I am grateful for very helpful conversations with both Dr. Proinsias Ó Drisceoil, Kilkenny Vocational Education Committee arts officer, and Dr. Máire Ní Annracháin of the National University of Ireland, Maynooth, on early Irish metonymy.

4. Paul E. Szarmach, “*The Dream of the Rood* as Ekphrasis,” in *Text, Image, Interpretation: Studies in Anglo-Saxon Literature and its Insular Context in Honour of Éamonn Ó Carragáin*, Studies in the Early Middle Ages 18, ed. Alastair Minnis and Jane Roberts (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols Publishing, 2007), pp. 267–288. Szarmach surveys Augustinian and Gregorian visual theory in relation to the Anglo-Saxon poem *The Dream of the Rood*, a poem whose ekphratic function, as he notes, nonetheless somewhat escapes from emerging conventional visual theory of the medieval Latin West. This will be discussed further in chapter six.
5. Gregory Toner, “The Ulster Cycle: Historiography or Fiction?,” *Cambrian Medieval Celtic Studies* 40 (2000): 6 [1–20].
6. Runia, “Presence,” p. 1.
7. Ann Dooley provides a very helpful analysis of patterning of place names on the cattle raid, noting difficulties with them, particularly in the Second Recension, in which they seem to become more detached from topography (though the raid in both main recensions still plays out on a fantasy-history landscape of the midlands, Ulster borderlands, and the Cooley peninsula). See Dooley, *Playing the Hero: Reading the Irish Saga Táin Bó Cúailgne* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006), pp. 45–47. James Carney argued for a probable seventh-century origin of the core story of the *Táin* in part on the basis of traditional association of the early-seventh-century poet Senchán Torpéist with assembly of the main narrative. Such a time period for its composition would coincide, Carney argued, with assembly of native laws in the face of Christianization. Carney, “Language and Literature to 1169,” in *A New History of Ireland I, Prehistoric and Early Ireland*, ed. Dáibhí Ó Cróinín (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 468 [451–510]. Carney also maintained that genealogical references to Ulster heroes living long before Christianity represent an older pre-Christian tradition regarding their *floruit*, altered by a narrative connecting their king, Conchobar mac Nessa, to the time of Christ; *ibid.*, p. 474.
8. T.M. Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 471. This historian’s quote parallels a passage in J.R.R. Tolkien’s fantasy history, itself reflecting indirectly the overlay landscape of the *side* [*The Lord of the Rings* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1994), p. 424]: “Do we walk in legends or on the green earth in the daylight?” “A man may do both . . . The green earth, say you? That is a mighty matter of legend, though you tread it under the light of day!”
9. Philip Goodchild, *Deleuze and Guattari: An Introduction to the Politics of Desire*, Theory, Culture & Society (London: SAGE Publications, 1996), pp. 84–86.
10. *Ibid.*, pp. 190, 187.
11. Gary Saul Morson, “Introductory Study: Dostoevsky’s Great Experiment,” in Dostoevsky, *A Writer’s Diary*, vol. 1 1873–1876, trans. Kenneth Lantz (Evanston IL: Northwestern University Press, 1997), p. 72 [1–117]; emphasis in the original.

12. Mary Carruthers, *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 9–10.
13. On the rise of Christian icons in the late sixth and seventh centuries, with disruptions from the Iconoclasm controversy, see Averil Cameron, “The Language of Images: the Rise of Icons and Christian Representation,” reprinted in *The Church and the Arts*, Studies in Church History 28, ed. Diana Wood (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), pp. 1–42. Iconography was related to landscape in the traditional relation of desert saints to wilderness; in sites and relics of the Holy Land; and in sacralization of Constantinople as the ecumenical Christian metropolis and city of the Theotokos, a type of urban-iconographic “ecosystem” different from Augustine’s vision of two distinct cities of man and heaven in a Rome that unlike Byzantium had already fallen to barbarians. The Cappadocian Basil the Great in his *Hexaemeron* perhaps first articulated in its specific terminology (developed from Pauline and gospel texts) the apophatic doctrine of the divine energies that underlies iconographic perspective: “We know the essence through the energy. No one has ever seen the essence of God, but we believe in the essence because we experience the energy” (quoted in Kallistos Ware, *The Orthodox Way* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Press, 1999), p. 22).
14. Tendentious issues related to dating the epic are summarized but not exhausted by Ruairi Ó hUiginn, “The Background and Development of *Táin Bó Cúailnge*,” in *Aspects of the Táin*, ed. J.P. Mallory (Belfast: December, 1992), pp. 29–67. A compilation of the importance of topographical and place-name detail to the work as a whole is found in Gene Clifford Haley, *The Topography of the Táin Bó Cúailnge*, unpublished PhD thesis (Cambridge MA: Harvard University, 1970).
15. 245b, lines 32879–900 in *The Book of Leinster, formerly Lebar na Núachongbála*, vol. 5, ed. R.I. Best and M.A. O’Brien (Dublin: Dublin Institute, 1967), p. 2, lines 1–29. [*The Book of Leinster, formerly Lebar na Núachongbála*, vol. 1, eds. R.I. Best, Osborn Bergin, M.A. O’Brien (Dublin: Dublin Institute, 1954); vol. 2–5, ed. R.I. Best and M.A. O’Brien (Dublin: Dublin Institute, 1956–67); vol. 6, ed. Annie O’Sullivan (Dublin: Dublin Institute, 1983).] Trans. Thomas Kinsella, *The Táin, Translated from the Irish Epic Táin Bó Cuailnge* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970), pp. 1–2.
16. See Tomás Ó Cathasaigh, “The Rhetoric of *Fingal Rónáin*,” *Celtica* 17 (1985): 144 [123–44]; and Anne Heinrichs, “‘Intertexture’ and its Functions in Early Written Sagas: A Stylistic Observation of *Heiðarvíga saga*, *Reykðla saga* and the Legendary Olafssaga,” *Scandinavian Studies* 48 (1976): 127 [127–45].
17. Peter Brown, review of Suzanne Conklin Akbari’s *Seeing through the Veil: Optical Theory and Medieval Allegory* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), in *Speculum* 81 (2006): 463–64 at 464.
18. Mikhail Bakhtin, “Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity,” in *Art and Answerability: Early Philosophical Essays by M.M. Bakhtin*, ed. Michael Holquist and Vadim Liapunov, trans. Vadim Liapunov (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990), p. 56 [4–256].
19. See Doris Edel, “The *Táin Bó Cúailnge* between orality and literacy,” in her *The Celtic West and Europe, Studies in Celtic Literature and the Early Irish Church* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2001), p. 218 [216–26].
20. Hildegard L.C. Tristram, “Latin and Latin Learning in the *Táin Bó Cúailnge*,” *Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie* 49–50 (1997–98): 847–77; “What is the Purpose of *Táin Bó Cúailnge*?” in *Ulidia, Proceedings of the First International Conference on the Ulster Cycle of Tales*, ed. J.P. Mallory and G. Stockman (Belfast: December Publications, 1994), pp. 11–21.

21. *Lebor na hUidre, Book of the Dun Cow*, ed. Best and Osborn, reprint (1929; repr. Dublin: Dublin Institute, 1970).
22. For discussion of the Cycle's high-gravity pull on other tales, see Jeffrey Gantz's introductory comments to his translation of the tales, *Early Irish Myths and Sagas* (London: Penguin, 1981).
23. Wallace Stevens, "Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird," in *Collected Poetry and Prose*, ed. Frank Kermode and Joan Richardson (New York: Library of America, 1997), pp. 74–76.
24. Of uncertain date, though Tom Peete Cross and Clark Harris Slover say the *Óenét Emire* component of the text may date to the eighth century in earliest form; *Ancient Irish Tales* (1936; repr. New York: Barnes and Noble, 1996), p. 153. The earliest extant version of the text is in the twelfth-century *Lebor na hUidre*.
25. *Serglige Con Culainn*, ed. Myles Dillon (Dublin: Dublin Institute, 1953), paragraph 33, pp. 17–18, and lines 541 and 558, p. 19; trans. Jeffrey Gantz, *Early Irish Myths and Sagas*, pp. 167–68, 170.
26. Annemarie Weyl Carr, "Images: Expressions of Faith and Power," in *Byzantium: Faith and Power (1261–1557)*, ed. Helen C. Evans (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2004), p. 150 [143–152].
27. *Ibid.*, p. 151.
28. *Ibid.*, p. 150.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 144.
30. Mary Carruthers, *The Craft of Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 136–137.
31. *Ibid.*, p. 333, note 46.
32. Theories of optical extramission and intromission were often mixed and ill-defined; see David C. Lindberg, *Theories of Vision from Al-Kindi to Kepler*, *The Chicago History of Science and Medicine* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976). The iconographic extramission described here also parallels more modern views of "intromission": the gaze does not reside in the object for the iconographic viewer. See Robert S. Nelson, "To Say and to See, Visuality Before and Beyond the Renaissance" and Michael Camille, "Before the Gaze, The Internal Senses and Late Medieval Practices of Seeing," both in *Visuality Before and Beyond the Renaissance, Seeing as Others Saw*, ed. Robert S. Nelson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 143–68 and 197–223, respectively.
33. James R. Payton, Jr., "John of Damascus on Human Cognition: An Element in His Apologetic for Icons," *Church History* 65 (1996): 180–1 [173–83].
34. Eriugena, *Periphyseon* IV.24, PL 122:854A; *Periphyseon (The Division of Nature)*, *Cahiers d'études médiévales*, Cahier spécial 3, trans. I.P. Sheldon-Williams with John J. O'Meara (Montreal: Éditions Bellarmin and Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks, 1987), pp. 514–15.
35. Akbari, *Seeing through the Veil*, pp. 23–24. The discussion of medieval visual theory and its philosophical backgrounds in the first two chapters of this work are helpful background to this discussion, although oriented toward the high and later medieval eras.
36. *Ibid.*, p. 5.
37. On Augustine's visual theory, see *ibid.*, pp. 27–28.
38. Jás Elsner, "Between Mimesis and Divine Power: Visuality in the Greco-Roman World," in *Visuality Before and Beyond the Renaissance, Seeing as Others Saw*, ed.

- Robert S. Nelson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 61 [45–69]; emphasis in the original.
39. Hilary Richardson, “Visual Arts and Society,” in *A New History of Ireland I, Prehistoric and Early Ireland*, ed. Dáibhí Ó Cróinín (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 691 [680–713].
 40. On monasticism as rhetoric see Jean Leclercq, *The Love of Learning and the Desire for God, A Study of Monastic Culture*, trans. Catherine Misrahi, third edn (New York: Fordham University Press, 1982); and Conrad Leyser, “*Lectio Divina, Oratio Pura*: Rhetoric and the Techniques of Asceticism in the *Conferences* of John Cassian,” in *Modelli di santità e modelli di comportamento*, ed. Giulia Barone, Marina Caffiero, and Francesco Scorza Barcellona (Torino, Italy: Rosenberg and Salles, 1994), pp. 79–105.
 41. Nelson, “To Say and to See, Ekphrasis and Vision in Byzantium,” pp. 158–59 [143–68].
 42. See chapter two here for discussion of Étaín’s transformations in *Tochmarc Étaíne*.
 43. *Togail Bruidne Da Derga*, Medieval and Modern Irish Series 8, ed. Eleanor Knott (Dublin: Dublin Institute, 1936), § 1; repr. 1963, 1975; repr. by CELT: The Corpus of Electronic Texts (Cork: University College Cork), at <http://www.ucc.ie/celt/published/G301017/index.html> [accessed March 5, 2007]. The story is found in manuscripts including the Lebor na hUidre and the Yellow Book of Lecan.
 44. “*Togail Bruidne Dá Derga*, The Destruction of Dá Derga’s Hostel,” § 1, in *The Celtic Heroic Age: Literary Sources for Ancient Celtic Europe and Early Ireland and Wales*, fourth edn, ed. John T. Koch with John Carey (Aberystwyth, UK: Celtic Studies Publications, 2003), p. 166.
 45. *Táin Bó Cúailnge: Recension I*, ed. Cecile O’Rahilly (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1987), pp. 68–69, ll. 2245–2278.
 46. *Táin Bó Cúailnge*, ed. Cecile O’Rahilly (Dublin: Dublin Institute, 1987), p. 187.
 47. Damianos, “The Icon as a Ladder of Divine Ascent in Form and Color,” in *Byzantium: Faith and Power (1261–1557)*, ed. Helen C. Evans (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2004), p. 336 [385–90].
 48. *Ibid.*, p. 339.
 49. Eunice Dauterman Maguire and Harry Maguire, *Other Icons: Art and Power in Byzantine Secular Culture* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006).
 50. See chapter two, and Vladimir Lossky, *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church*. 1944, trans. Fellowship of St. Alban and St. Sergius (Crestwood, NY, 1976), p. 96.
 51. See Richardson, “Visual Arts and Society,” pp. 708–12, for a survey of different phases of Irish Sea figurative art as expressed on stone crosses.
 52. John Cassian, *Conlationes* XIV.4.1, in *The Conferences*, Ancient Christian Writers 57, trans. Boniface Ramsey (Mahway, NJ: Newman Press, 1997), p. 506.
 53. Richardson, “Visual Arts and Society,” p. 687.
 54. Carruthers, *Craft of Thought*, p. 271.
 55. James H. Billington, *The Face of Russia* (New York: TV Books, 1999), p. 50.
 56. Kathleen Hughes, “The Golden Age of Early Christian Ireland,” in *The Course of Irish History*, ed. T.W. Moody and F.X. Martin, rev. edn (Lanham, MD: Roberts Rinehart, 1995), pp. 76–90, at 86.
 57. This point is made by Oliver Sacks in his article “Stereo Sue” in *The New Yorker* magazine [(June 19, 2006): 64–73], which also cites similar views by Cornell University paleobiologist John Cisne.

58. Paul the Silentiary, *Description of Hagia Sophia*, ll. 617–46, trans. Cyril Mango, *Art of the Byzantine Empire* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1972), pp. 85–86.
59. *Ibid.*, ll. 647–54, 617–46; trans. Mango, *Art of the Byzantine Empire*, pp. 84–85.
60. James Trilling, “The Image Not Made by Hands and the Byzantine Way of Seeing,” in *The Holy Face and the Paradox of Representation: Papers from a Colloquium held at the Biblioteca Hertziana, Rome and the Villa Spelman, Florence, 1998*, Villa Spelman Colloquia 6 (Bologna: Nuova Alfa Editoriale, 1998), pp. 125–26 [109–27]. Vincent Scully [in *Architectural, the Natural and the Manmade* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1991)] created a different emphasis in his interpretation of the Hagia Sophia and nature in a grand narrative of Platonism separating humanity and the physical world almost from the start of Western culture. Yet he arguably failed to appreciate the dynamic bodily (and cosmopolitan “non-Western”) distinctiveness of early Christian ascetic spatial practice.
61. See, e.g., the description by Carruthers, *Craft of Thought*, of ekphrasis-style writing by Augustine, Gregory the Great, Hugh of St. Victor and also the Carolingian Plan of St. Gall, p. 241, and following.
62. Trilling, “The Image Not Made by Hands,” pp. 121–22.
63. “The Meaning and Language of Icons,” in Leonid Ouspensky and Vladimir Lossky, *The Meaning of Icons* (Yonkers, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1999), pp. 23–50, at 40–41.
64. *De Trinitate*, VIII.iv, Corpus Christianorum, series Latina, L (Turnholt, Bel.: Brepols, 1968), pp. 275–76; trans. Gilbert Dagron, “Holy Images and Likeness,” *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 45 (1991): 24 [23–33].
65. Dagron, “Holy Images and Likeness,” p. 26.
66. Barbara Raw, *Trinity and Incarnation in Anglo-Saxon Art and Thought*, Cambridge Studies in Anglo-Saxon England 21 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 92; 94–95.
67. See, e.g., the discussion of Archetype in St. Gregory of Nyssa, *On the Making of Man*, XVI, in *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Church Fathers*, 1892, Series 2, vol. 5, trans. Henry Wace (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994), pp. 404–406. Following the Greek, exegetes of the patristic era often referred to people as made “after the image of God,” the image being Christ.
68. John of Damascus, *On the Divine Images*, III.23; trans. Andrew Louth, *Three Treatises on the Divine Images* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2003), p. 99.
69. *Conlationes* IX and X; *The Conferences*, trans. Ramsey, pp. 323–393; Carruthers, *Craft of Thought*, p. 176.
70. *Conlationes* I.18 and XIV.13; *The Conferences*, trans. Ramsey, pp. 57 and 517–18. Cassian also compared the process to the work of money changers trading values across cultural-religious systems.
71. *Conlationes* I.15; translation from G.E.H. Palmer, Philip Sherrard, and Kallistos Ware, *The Philokalia, the Complete Text Compiled by St. Nikodimos of the Holy Mountain*, 4 vols (London: Faber and Faber, 1979), 1: 96–97.
72. *Conlationes* XIV; Ramsey, *Conferences*, pp. 499–532; see discussion in Carruthers, *Craft of Thought*, pp. 90–91, 95.
73. *Conlationes* X.3 and 10.1–3; trans. Ramsey, *Conferences*, pp. 372–73, 378–79; Elizabeth A. Clark, *The Origenist Controversy, The Cultural Construction of an Early Christian Debate* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992), pp. 66, 69–70.

74. Such apophatic metonymy also is equivalent rhetorically to the mystagogy that Édouard Jeaneau has described as a master trope in Eriugena's philosophical view of art as initiation into mystery. That view emerges from St. Paul's description of incarnational mimesis, I Cor. 11.1 and Eph. 5.1 ["De l'art comme mystagogie (Le Jugement dernier vu par Érigène)," in *De l'art comme mystagogie. Jugement dernier et des fins dernières à l'époque gothique; actes du colloque de la Fondation Hardt tenu à Genève du 13 au 16 février 1994*, ed. Yves Christe (Poitiers: Centre d'Études Supérieures de Civilisation Médiévale, 1996), pp. 1–8]. Jeaneau relates Eriugena's views to the illustrations of the *Codex Aureus* of Saint-Emmeram, which Michel Herren in turn has sought to relate to the Palatine Church of St. Mary at Compiègne ["Eriugena's 'Aulae Sidereae' the 'Codex Aureus,' and the Palatine Church of St. Mary at Compiègne," *Studi Medievali* 28(2) (December 1987): 593–608]. The codex features in one famous illustration the Lamb of God, a type of nonhuman symbolism for Christ condemned by the Quinisextum Constantinopolitan synod. Gerhart B. Ladner, "The Concept of the Image in the Greek Fathers and the Byzantine Iconographic Controversy," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 7 (1953): 19 [1–34], though verses related to Eriugena's work are found in it at a mandorla image of Christ.
75. On the emphasis on experiential versus visionary in the Macarian brand of apophatic asceticism, see George A. Maloney, ed., *Pseudo-Macarius, The Fifty Spiritual Homilies and the Great Letter*, The Classics of Western Spirituality (New York: Paulist Press, 1992), p. 2. Maloney notes how Cassian borrows from Macarius' teachings on perfection and gifts of the Holy Spirit, p. 23.
76. Peter Brown's valuable and influential theory on the "hominization" of the natural world in Late Classical and Early Medieval art and worldviews fails to take into account sufficiently the significance of this complex of ideas and themes in early medieval Greek and Syriac Christianity, together with analogues in early Irish Christian culture. Brown suggests a cultural shift "from participation to vision" in the emergence by the end of the sixth century of an opaque sense of words and images as not representing this world even transformatively, but providing a glimpse of the invisible world beyond, or "worlds inhabited by the holy dead, made present on earth" ["Images as a Substitute for Writing," in *East and West: Modes of Communication, Proceedings of the First Plenary Conference at Merida 1994 (Programme on the Transformation of the Roman World)*, ed. Evangelos Chrysos and Ian Wood (Leiden, Neth.: Brill, 1999), pp. 15–34 at 15]. Brown's observation does not fully explain the distinctive iconographic landscapes of early Insular narratives and art, or nuance what Herbert L. Kessler terms the Byzantine sense that "the icon was transparent, a window onto the higher reality," *contra* the developing Augustinian focus on the function of a material Christian image as arousing interior emotion and thus stimulating direct vision of the divine ([*Spiritual Seeing: Picturing God's Invisibility in Medieval Art* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000), p. 124]. The iconographic "window" involves the transfigured physical as cosmic portal or fractal mirror. Kessler reads the sixth-century apse mosaic at Sant' Apollinaire in Classe outside Ravenna more in the context of Brown's model (p. 113) than in relation to non-Augustinian spatial practice; compare Kallistos Ware's far different reading, based in Greek tradition, in "Healing Our Damaged World," *In Communion*, fall 2006, <http://incommunion.org/articles/essays/healing-our-damaged-world>. Relating Brown's theory of "localization" more fully to hominization would be helpful with regard to Irish Sea cultures [*The Cult of Saints* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), pp. 86–88].

77. Scenery and sites generously commented on, in private conversation, by Donnchaid Ó Corráin.
78. Augustine, *De Doctrina Christiana*, II.40.60.4–27, CCSL 32, 73–74.
79. Carruthers, *Craft of Thought*, 243.
80. John Cassian, *Conlationes* I.18, XIV.13; *The Conferences*, trans. Ramsey, pp. 57, 517–18.
81. Basil of Caesarea, “To Young Men, on How They Might Derive Profit from Pagan Literature,” in *The Letters IV*, Loeb Classical Library 270, trans. Roy J. Deferrari (London: William Heinemann, 1970), p. 391.
82. Margaret E. Goldsmith, *The Mode and Meaning of Beowulf* (London: Athlone Press, 1970), p. 33.
83. Julia Kristeva, *Revolution in Poetic Language*, trans. Margaret Waller (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), pp. 164, 211.
84. Julia Kristeva, “Holbein’s Dead Christ,” in *Black Sun, Depression and Melancholia*, trans. Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989), p. 132 [107–38].
85. Basil of Caesarea, *Hexaemeron* 1.2 and 5.2, quoted in John Chrysavgis, *Beyond the Shattered Image* (Minneapolis, MN: Light & Life Publishing, 1999), p. 181.
86. Trilling, “The Image Not Made by Hands.”
87. Thomas O’Loughlin, “The Tombs of the Saints: Their Significance for Adomnán,” in *Studies in Irish Hagiography: Saints and Scholars*, ed. John Carey, Máire Herbert, and Pádraig Ó Riain (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2001), p. 3 [1–14].
88. Thomas O’Loughlin, “The Exegetical Purpose of Adomnán’s *De Locis Sanctis*,” *Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies* 24 (Winter 1992): 40 [37–53].
89. *Conlationes*, 14.8.4; *The Conferences*, trans. Ramsey, p. 510.
90. Lisa M. Bitel, “Ekphrasis at Kildare: The Imaginative Architecture of a Seventh-Century Hagiographer,” *Speculum* 79 (2004): 605–27.

6 Archipelago and Empire

1. Picking up on a term used dismissively by Terry Eagleton, whose view of the archaic nature of the concept was taken to task by Eileen A. Joy and Mary K. Ramsey in “Liquid Beowulf,” their introduction to *The Postmodern Beowulf*, ed. Joy and Ramsey (Morgantown, WV: West Virginia University Press, 2007), pp. xxix–lxvii, at xxxi–xxxii. T.M. Charles-Edwards cites the example of the Irish provinces: “long-enduring entities fortified by a great accumulation of common loyalties, common traditions and common conceptions of the shape of their world” [*Early Christian Ireland, The Cambridge History of Ireland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 15].
2. Debra A. Cottrell, “The Semiotics of Conception, Construction and Use in the Delaware Indian Big House,” www.connerprairie.org/HistoryOnline/bighouse.html.
3. Charles D. Wright, “The Irish ‘Enumerative Style’ in Old English Homiletic Literature, Especially Vercelli Homily IX,” *Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies* 18 (1989): 56 [27–74].
4. Eph. 1.10.
5. John M. Hill, *The Cultural World in Beowulf*, *Anthropological Horizons* 6 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995), p. 4, 5. Jennifer Neville’s observation that “on a basic level the Anglo-Saxons did not have a word or expression for the modern conception of the natural world because they did not conceive of an

- entity defined by the supernatural” (despite an Old English otherworldly lexicon) relates to how the mead hall symbolizes universal space emanating from human interiority [*Representations of the Natural World in Old English Poetry*, Cambridge Studies in Anglo-Saxon England 27 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 2–3]. See also Alaric Hall, *Elves in Anglo-Saxon England, Matters of Belief, Health, Gender and Identity*, Anglo-Saxon Studies 8 (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell Press, 2007), pp. 11–12.
6. Peter Dronke’s *Imagination in the Late Pagan and Early Christian World: The First Nine Centuries A.D.* Millennio Medievale 42, Strumenti e Studi, n.s. 4 (Florence: SISMEL, Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2003) deals definitively with these issues in early Christian aesthetics, especially his chapters on sea imagery and earthly paradises. Eriugenan–Otherworld views of nature are best understood in light of Dronke’s thesis of a late-Classical/early medieval cultural arc, not attempts to synthesize late-medieval views with science from modernist standpoints [as in Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, *The Phenomenon of Man* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1976)].
 7. By contrast, hostels in early Irish stories tend to be more open to external worlds, not resisting relations with otherworldly landscape. And the “house of iron” motif encountered in some early Celtic stories (the Irish *Mesca Ulad* and the Second Branch of the Welsh *Mabinogi*) seems to contrast an isolated structure with both the *síde* and human community.
 8. Colin Ireland has highlighted possible Irish analogues of *The Seafarer* [“Some Analogues of the Old English *Seafarer* from Hiberno-Latin Sources,” reprinted in *The Otherworld Voyage in Early Irish Literature, An Anthology of Criticism*, ed. Jonathan M. Wooding (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2000), pp. 143–56]. The comparison here is with overall portrayal of human dwelling in nature. Sarah Lynn Higley, comparing Anglo-Saxon and Welsh poetry [*Between Languages: The Uncooperative Text in Early Welsh and Old English Nature Poetry* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1993), p. 14], notes how early Welsh tradition exhibits a greater tendency “to keep hidden rather than to make manifest... contrast this impulse in Welsh with the prevailing impulse in Old English—continually revealed in the elegies, the maxims and even the riddles—to explain, to clarify, to control, to preach.” But she does note in both Old English and early Welsh traditions a “vanishing” point of view in literary imagery, linguistic ambiguity, “the uncooperative text,” which she compares to semiotic communication contrasted by Kristeva with the linguistically symbolic. Comparing Eriugena’s treatment of the earlier Phoenix motif known from Lactantius/Claudian, with that of the anonymous Old English poem *Phoenix*, Dronke writes that to say that Eriugena’s treatment of the earthly Paradise in the motif “is allegorical would be to say too little. Rather, each detail becomes for him an imaginative illustration of his all-embracing vision of procession and return” (*Imagination in the Late Pagan and Early Christian World, The First Nine Centuries A.D.*, p. 131). The result is meta-allegorical and participatory, versus the Anglo-Saxon writer’s faux naturalism.
 9. This involves narratively a “contrapuntal variation” perhaps analogous also to antiphonal liturgical chanting in traditional Christian services. See Ann Buckley, “Music in Ireland to c. 1500,” in *A New History of Ireland I, Prehistoric and Early Ireland*, ed. Dáibhí Ó Cróinín (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 744–813. For “intertexture style,” a.k.a. “contrapuntal variation,” see Anne Heinrichs, “‘Intertexture’ and Its Functions in Early Written Sagas: A Stylistic Observation of *Heiðarviga Saga*, *Reykðæla Saga* and the Legendary Olafssaga,” in *Scandinavian Studies* 48 (1976): 127 [127–45]. The “turning inside-out” of physical world

through theme and contents of story-telling also reflects the paradox of Paul's "inner man" becoming cosmically connected with the Lord of Creation.

10. See Fabienne L. Michlet's discussion of Anglo-Saxon terminology for space, concluding that Old English spatial terms "designate a concrete and definite space," and quoting Nicholas Howe's observation that Anglo-Saxon land charters "speak of landscape as bounded, as contained by human-defined purposes" [*Creation, Migration, and Conquest: Imaginary Geography and Sense of Space in Old English Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 21]; and Nicholas Howe, "The Landscape of Anglo-Saxon England: Inherited, Invented, Imagined," in *Inventing Medieval Landscapes: Senses of Place in Western Europe*, ed. John Howe and Michael Wolfe (Tallahassee 2002), p. 102 [91–112]. See also Earl R. Anderson, "The Uncarpentered World of Old English Poetry," *Anglo-Saxon England* 20 (1991): 65–80.
11. Walter Horn with Ernest Born, "On the Selected Use of Sacred Numbers, Toward a Medieval Aesthetic," 3 *Viator* 6 (1975): 378 [351–390, plus plates].
12. Different temporalities occur also of course within stories-in-the-story of *Beowulf*, but they nonetheless more often subserve a mega-narrative of a more linear, hegemonically anthropocentric worldview. Two of the most prominent hostels in Irish stories are haunted places of otherworldly comeuppance (such as Da Derga's) or sorcery (such as Bricriu's) rather than centers to be defended as in *Beowulf* or the Guthlac *Vitae*. The hall of the Red Branch of the Ulster Heroes is at a mound complex, as are royal centers at Temair and Cruachan. Robert Folz, *The Concept of Empire in Western Europe from the Fifth to the Fourteenth Century*, trans. Sheila Ann Ogilvie (London: Edward Arnold, 1969), notes that the notion of national empire developed distinctively in Anglo-Saxon culture, while Charlemagne's regime developed a new concept of "the Church and the Empire welded together in one Western Christendom" (p. 25). See Luke Huber Wenger's *Hrabanus Maurus, Fulda and Carolingian Spirituality*, unpublished history PhD thesis (Harvard University, Cambridge, MA, 1973). Antonio Sennis has outlined a shift in Western European spatial thinking starting in the Carolingian era, though he does not account for cultural difference in the Irish Sea zone ["Narrating Places: Narrative and Space in Medieval Monasteries," in *People and Space in the Middle Ages, 300–1300*, Studies in the Early Middle Ages 15, ed. Wendy Davies, Guy Halsall, and Andrew Reynolds (Turnhout, Bel.: Brepols, 2006), pp. 275–94].
13. Fabienne L. Michelet, *Creation, Migration, and Conquest* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 52, 62, 63.
14. See, e.g., Virgil, *Eclogues* i.51–52; Loeb Classical Library, ed. H.R. Fairclough (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), pp. 51–52.
15. Derek Pearsall and Elizabeth Salter, *Landscapes and Seasons of the Medieval World* (London: Elek Books, 1973), p. 8; emphasis in the original.
16. The triumph of this trend of what has been called political Augustinianism in Britain is seen in the feudal role imposed upon and assumed by Anglo-Norman monasteries in the twelfth century and afterward, paralleling development of the papacy itself as monarchy. See Kevin L. Shirley, *The Secular Jurisdiction of Monasteries in Anglo-Norman and Angevin England* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell Press, 2004).
17. Pearsall and Salter, *Landscapes and Seasons*, p. 14. This tendency has also been noted in the later Byzantine world, although in a cultural context still arguably less privileging of individual interiority [Henry Maguire, "Paradise Withdrawn," in *Image and Imagination in Byzantine Art*, Variorum Collected Study 866 (Aldershot, UK, and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2007), pp. 20–35].

18. Catherine A.M. Clarke, *Literary Landscapes and the Idea of England, 700–1400* (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell & Brewer, 2006).
19. Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland*, p. 585.
20. Nerys Patterson, *Cattle-Lords and Clansmen, the Social Structure of Early Ireland*, second edn (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1994), pp. 107, 109, 113. Note the caution on Patterson's study earlier here in chapter one, endnote 118.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 109; Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland*, p. 22, notes: "The *mag* may be an island of dense settlement in the midst of thinly settled and less cultivated land."
22. Patterson, *Cattle-Lords and Clansmen*, p. 288. But in the early Irish tale *Fingal Rónán*, poetic allusion to cows by Echaid's daughter can refer at once to a place-name of bovine origin, to actual cows, and to her own state, even as she refers to the tragic male hero Rónán as a hapless herdsman. [*Fingal Rónán and Other Stories*, Medieval and Modern Irish Series 16, ed. David Greene (1975; repr. Dublin: Dublin Institute, 1993), ll. 129–32, p. 7]. "The Kin-Slaying of Rónán," in *The Celtic Heroic Age: Literary Sources for Ancient Celtic Europe and Early Ireland and Wales*, trans. Máirín Ní Dhonnchadha, ed. John Koch with John Carey, fourth edn (Aberystwyth, UK: Celtic Studies Publications, 2003), p. 278 and note 19 [274–82].
23. *Familia* is defined by Charles-Edwards as indicating the people belonging to a saint's principal and affiliated churches, while *paruchia* focuses on lands and dependent churches of the primary church (*Early Christian Ireland*, p. 123), the latter in twentieth-century scholarship often held to be synonymous with federation. While recent scholarship has tended to downplay the strength of extraterritorial monastic networks, Charles-Edwards notes "a great saint could offer a powerful focus of unity, capable of helping to sustain a widely scattered people," in a kind of intra-territorial diaspora, as with the Fothairt and their scattered centers and churches devoted to St. Brigit (p. 14).
24. In Ireland, Armagh and Kildare, in relation to Canterbury in Kent.
25. Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland*, p. 13.
26. Charles-Edwards, "Introduction: Prehistoric and Early Ireland," pp. lxxix–lxxxix [lvii–lxxxii].
27. Dáibhí Ó Cróinín, *Early Medieval Ireland 400–1200* (London: Longman, 1995).
28. Michael J. Enright's recent reconstruction of "Celtic kingship theory" from the iconography of the Sutton Hoo scepter posits pre-Christian notions of cosmic kingship in Britain and Ireland that could have influenced literary elites in both islands (at least in an antiquarian sense as reimagined in texts such as the *Mabinogi*). In explicating early Irish accounts of Niall of the Nine Hostages and the goddess of sovereignty, Enright notes that the poetic version by Cuan Ó Lotcháin compares the goddess of the land to the sun, which provides the link for Enright between fertility and fire and metamorphosis that he sees in early Celtic cosmic kingship. Such a relationship parallels patristic Christian discussion of light, and the transmission of heat, as representing the diffusion of divine energies in nature: the *logoi* of the *Logos*, paralleling Enright's connection of fire with the words of truth of the goddess: "It is partly in the analysis of verbal exchanges that we see what the goddess of territorial fertility has to do with royal truth. Her monstrosity is a shell that is meant to be broken. No man could possibly sleep with her unless he could hear the ring of truth in her speech that contradicts the exterior evidence" [*The Sutton Hoo Sceptre and the Roots of Celtic Kingship Theory* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2006), p. 171].

29. Jaski, *Early Irish Kingship and Succession*. See also Charles Doherty, "Kingship in Early Ireland," in *The Kingship and Landscape of Tara*, ed. Edel Bréathnach (Dublin: Four Courts Press for The Discovery Programme, 2005), pp. 3–31.
30. Robin Chapman Stacey, *The Road to Judgment: From Custom to Court in Medieval Ireland and Wales* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994), pp. 226, 228. In contrast with the developing proprietary monarchies of Francia and the Anglo-Saxon realms, there arguably were more parallels between the symbolic role of Irish high kingship and the iconographic emperor of Byzantium (not to discount the on-the-ground ruthlessness of both). Both reflected in part what anthropologists noted in Southeast Asian kingship as anonymous sacred signs in a liminal space symbolically between the physical and ideal [Roy A. Rappaport, *Ritual and Religion in the Making of Identity*, Cambridge Studies in Social and Cultural Anthropology 110 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 332, citing Clifford Geertz]. Carey notes the ideal Irish king's "individuality is the symbolic embodiment of their [the people's] collective being" ("Ideal Kingship in Early Ireland," in *Monarchy*, ed. Carey (London: Temenos Academy, 2002) p. 58 [45–65]), rather than the people and the land being one of the king's two bodies as his proprietary self as in later Western European models. In Byzantine royal theory, "Every emperor is an image of God," wrote Theophylaktos of Ohrid to Nikephoros Melissenos, though significantly an image of the human nature of Christ: *Théophylacte d'Achrida, Lettres*, ed. P. Gautier (Thessalonica, 1986), 157.14–17, trans. Henry Maguire, in "The Heavenly Court," in *Byzantine Court Culture from 829 to 1204*, ed. Maguire (Washington DC: Dumbarton Oaks, 1997), p. 247 [247–258]. See also Michael Azkoul, "Saint Photios and the Filioque," in St. Photios, *On the Mystagogy of the Holy Spirit*, ed. Azkoul (Brookline MA, 1983), pp. 5–27; Máire Herbert, "Goddess and King: The Sacred Marriage in Early Ireland," in *Women and Sovereignty*, ed. Louise Olga Fradenburg (Edinburgh, 1992), pp. 265–75; and Dean A. Miller, "Byzantine Sovereignities and Feminine Potencies," in the same collection, pp. 250–63. Apparent "weak" kingship in Irish laws, its role shaped textually by the learned class in terms of protection of the culture, was in story focused on the "truth of the king"—wise counsel identified with words and the interests of the learned classes, implying a balance of human political and otherworldly concerns [see, e.g., *Scéla Éogain 7 Comaic*, ed. Thomas Ó Cathasaigh, *The Heroic Biography of Cormac mac Airt* (Dublin: Dublin Institute, 1977), pp. 122–23]. Inaugurations (at least inside pre-Norman Ireland) seem not to have been conducted by clergy but symbolically represented ordination by the people, associated with royal sites such as Temair/Tara rather than crowns and anointing [Jaski, *Early Irish Kingship and Succession*, p. 60]. See also Charles-Edwards' discussion of Columba's reported blessing of a king of Dál Riata (*Early Christian Ireland*, pp. 360–61), and observation on an Irish canonical collection: "Early Irish kings were not crowned and, in spite of some interest in royal unction in the *Hibernensis*, they seem not to have been anointed either" (p. 481). There are potential reflections of earlier theological models as well. In the trinitarianism of Cappadocian-based theology, "the idea of divine-monarchy loses its political-theological character," even as that theology "altogether rejected the idea of a possible analogy between the earthly monarchy and divine sovereignty." [The first quoted phrase is from Erik Peterson, *Der Monotheismus als politisches Problem* (Leipzig: Jacob Hegner, 1935), p. 102, cited in György Geréb, "Carl Schmitt and Erik Peterson on Political Theology," in *Monotheistic Kingship, The Medieval Variants*, CEU Medievalia, ed. Aziz Al-Azmeh and János M. Bak

- (Budapest and New York: Central European University Press, 2004), p. 44]. The second is from Geréby, “Carl Schmitt and Erik Peterson,” p. 43.) The famous theory of the “king’s two bodies” in monarchy in the West “would have been utterly counterintuitive” in theology shaped by “a Cyrillian sharpening of the complete union in one hypostasis, but simultaneous identity preserved for the divine and the human natures of Christ,” the ruler being a cosmic icon of the human nature, not the divine (Geréby, “Carl Schmitt and Erik Peterson,” p. 59). Distinctions could even potentially go back in *longue durée* to pre-Christian cultural roots, given Roman accounts of Germanic tribes ruled by priest-kings, in contrast to Celtic tribes noted for distinct classes of kings and druid-priests.
31. This relates again to iconography. Averil Cameron notes that the latter’s rise was related to a crisis of authority in the Empire in the late sixth and seventh centuries, in which the church and specifically monasticism played increasingly important roles as sources of authority vis-à-vis a challenged imperium [“The Language of Images: the Rise of Icons and Christian Representation,” reprinted in *The Church and the Arts*, Studies in Church History 28, ed. Diana Wood (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), pp. 1–42]. Icons “are an important element in a sign-system through which knowledge, no longer accessible in the old way, could still be reliably assessed” (p. 4). The crafted Irish landscape of continuity became an important texture from which to weave an iconography of words. It paralleled a posited differentiation of so-called Hibernian and Roman styles of Christian art. Such cultural competition has been suggested by T.M. Charles-Edwards in relation to illuminated manuscripts and architecture; it perhaps encouraged an aesthetic showcasing of native culture in a Christian context not at doctrinal odds with Rome (*Early Christian Ireland*, pp. 326–43).
 32. See also, on these different views of time and nature, Georgios I. Mantzaridis, *Time and Man*, trans. Julian Vulliamy (South Canaan, PA: St. Tikhon’s Seminary Press, 1996), p. 6, which references St. Basil the Great, *Hexameron* 1, 6, PG29, 13B. In paraphrasing Basil’s viewpoint, Mantzaridis writes, “The linear passage of time contains never-ending cycles of time which are an image of eternity.”
 33. Animal studies scholar Cary Wolfe describes the potential threat of a metonymic confusion to colonial domination as “the irreducible intrication of aesthetic representation and mimesis within sacrificial sociality” [*Animal Culture, the Discourse of Species, and Posthumanist Theory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), p. 117]. Such metonymic double-mimesis in early medieval Christian symbolism involves potentially subversive reciprocal synechdochal displacement: God/human, life/death, macrocosmic/microcosmic, universal/corporeal, Otherworld/everyday. Traditionalist writers on Christian iconography have argued that in iconographic art there is a late classical/early medieval fusion of simple stylized symbolism of the early persecuted church with Classical portraiture [John Maximovitch, “Concerning Iconography,” *Heritage* 1.1 (September 1968): 4–8], in effect melding art of the desert and of the cities of the East, which in Ireland was further layered by hybridities perhaps akin to magical realism in Latin America today.
 34. The development of alternate multiple temporalities narratively also perhaps parallels St. Columbanus’ Hiberno-Latin arguments for acceptance of varied cultural practices within Christianity (Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland*, p. 370).
 35. Harald Kleinschmidt, *Perception and Action in Medieval Europe* (Woodbridge, UK: The Boydell Press, 2005), p. 32; he describes “fundamentalist ethics enshrined

- in Augustine's work" at odds with "Eriugena's ethical theory [that] supported the conceptualization of action as process-related rather than goal oriented" (p. 138).
36. John V. Kelleher, "The *Táin* and the Annals," *Ériu* 22 (1971): 107–27 plus fold-out genealogy charts. David Dumville more recently cautioned about some of Kelleher's assumptions ["Ulster Heroes in the Early Irish Annals: A Caveat," *Éigse* 17 (1977), 47–54], noting that insertion of heroes into the annals comes perhaps as late as the eleventh century.
 37. Ann Dooley has also noticed, amid the fluidity of the text's various versions and scribal handlers, that glosses by one scribe (identified as M) of the First Recension suggest a possible provenance for that editor at Kells: *Playing the Hero: Reading the Irish Saga Táin Bó Cúailnge* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006), pp. 45–47, and p. 227, note 27. She also observes that scribe H's interventions in the LU as a whole suggest an area constituent to Clonmacnois (pp. 98–99).
 38. Pádraig Ó Riain revised Kelleher's theory, moving the time of the composition slightly earlier in the ninth century, and in a different ecclesiastical-political context, though still related to possession of Armagh. His shifting the focus to a Connacht dynasty and its ecclesiastical allies is by the end less convincing than Kelleher's, considering association of Connacht with the origins of the Uí Néill, and the likely implications of this for the northern Uí Néill as a target of satire ["The Táin: A Clue to its Origins," in *Ulidia, Proceedings of the First International Conference on the Ulster Cycle of Tales*, ed. J.P. Mallory and G. Stockman (Belfast: December Publications, 1994), pp. 31–37]. For a current summary of theories on the origins and contexts of the *Táin*, see Dooley, *Playing the Hero*, p. 19.
 39. Westley Follett, *Céli Dé in Ireland, Monastic Writing and Identity in the Early Middle Ages*, Studies in Celtic History 23 (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell Press, 2006), p. 217. Charles-Edwards suggests a sharper differentiation of the movement from earlier monasticism in *Early Christian Ireland*, p. 7.
 40. Follett, *Céli Dé in Ireland*, p. 190, 195, 213.
 41. Benjamin Hudson, "Gaelic Princes and Gregorian Reform," in *Irish Sea Studies 900–1200* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2006), p. 215 [212–229].
 42. *Ibid.*, p. 220.
 43. Benjamin Hudson, "The Practical Hero," in *Irish Sea Studies 900–1200*, p. 141 [125–42].
 44. To further illustrate complexities of the local political situation in relation to the mantles of the old Ulaid and Patrick: The neighboring Dál nAraidi, also defeated by the Cénel Éogain ultimately, had come to claim to be the "true Ulaid" of yore in this period, but their local rivals the Dál Fiatach were associated with the Ulaid realm in the eighth and ninth centuries, evidencing strong connections with northern monastic centers at Bangor and Downpatrick, and through the latter with Patrician tradition (see, e.g., Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland*, pp. 65–67). Meanwhile the Airgíalla generally had become more and more closely associated with the Cenél nÉogain, despite disputes (p. 518).
 45. F.J. Byrne, "Church and Politics, c. 750–c. 1100," in *A New History of Ireland I, Prehistoric and Early Ireland*, ed. Dáibhí Ó Cróinín (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 675 [656–79].
 46. Hudson, "Gaelic Princes and Gregorian Reform," p. 215.
 47. Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland*, pp. 589–90; for Charles-Edwards' reconstruction and translation of "Chronicle of Ireland" Ur-annals, see his *The Chronicle of Ireland*, Translated Texts for Historians, vol. 44, 2 vols (Liverpool,

- UK: Liverpool University Press, 2005); for the ninth century see the first volume, which also lists editions and sources.
48. Kelleher, "The *Táin* and the Annals," p. 125.
 49. Perhaps accompanying social changes leading to the relative decline of the "free" men in the social system posited by F.J. O'Byrne by the eleventh century, with the Old Irish *airecht* assembly-court of those *airig* transforming more into a king's council in parallel with developments elsewhere in Europe ("Ireland and her Neighbours," p. 878). Byrne notes the apparent transformation of local kings and leaders into quasi-feudal hereditary lords by the twelfth century, following the earlier lead of the counts of the Carolingian courts.
 50. F.J. Byrne, "Ireland Before the Battle of Clontarf," in *A New History of Ireland I, Prehistoric and Early Ireland*, ed. Dáibhí Ó Cróinín (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 853 [52–61].
 51. Charles Edwards, "Introduction: Prehistoric and Early Ireland," p. lxiv.
 52. N.B. Aitchison, *Armagh and the Royal Centres in Early Medieval Ireland* (Woodbridge, UK: Cruithne/Boydell & Brewer, 1994), p. 169.
 53. Damian McManus, *A Guide to Ogam*, Maynooth Monographs 4 (Maynooth: An Sagart, 1991), pp. 36–39. There was also a fusing of words of divination and physical food, perhaps seen as a type of pagan typing of the Eucharist, most famously in the incident of Finn's thumb and the cooked salmon. Regarding divination through chewing flesh, *teinm láide*, see John Carey, trans., "The Boyhood Deeds of Finn," in *The Celtic Heroic Age*, p. 198 [194–201]. Regarding springtime foods at Samhain, p. 199, notes 22 and 23; see also Joseph Falaky Nagy, *The Wisdom of the Outlaw: The Boyhood Deeds of Finn in Gaelic Narrative Tradition* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), and John Carey, "The *Three Things Required of a Poet*," *Ériu* 48 (1997), 41–58. The reportedly ninth-century St. Euophrosynos the Cook is said to have provided his monastery with a branch of apples from Paradise, an explicitly Christian analogue to Irish narratives of otherworldly fruits. See Thomas Marretta, trans., "The Commemoration of the Venerable Euphrosynos," in *The Great Collection of the Lives of the Saints, vol. 1, September*, ed. St. Demetrius of Rostov (House Springs, MO: Chrysostom Press, 1994), pp. 223–26.
 54. The account in *Auraicept na nÉces* ("primer of poets"), originating perhaps in the late seventh century, sees Irish as formed from the best of every language, thus being close to the original language of Paradise [Anders Ahlquist, *The Early Irish linguist: An Edition of the Canonical Part of Auraicept na nÉces* (Helsinki: Societas Scientiarum Fennica, 1983), 1.13, p. 48].
 55. Kevin Murray, "The Role of the Cuilebad in Immram Snédgusa 7 Maic Riagla," in *The Otherworld Voyage in Early Irish Literature*, ed. Jonathan Wooding (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2000), pp. 187–93.
 56. Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland*, 106; see D. Binchy, ed., *Críth Gablach*, Medieval and Modern Irish Series (Dublin: Dublin Institute, 1941); trans. E. MacNeill, "Ancient Irish Law: The Law of Status or Franchise," *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, 36 C (1923): 265–316.
 57. As developed in a series of thorough but controversial studies by David Howlett, most recently Muirchú Moccu Maithéni's "*Vita Sancti Patricii*" *Life of Saint Patrick* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2006).
 58. "Having been instructed in this way [by the psalms], with our dispositions for our teachers, we shall grasp this [significance] as something seen rather than heard, and from the inner disposition of the heart we shall bring forth not what has been committed to memory but what is inborn in the very nature of things. Thus we

- shall penetrate its meaning not through the written text but with experience leading the way . . ." John Cassian, *Conlationes* 10.11.5 and 6; trans. Boniface Ramsey, *John Cassian: The Conferences*, Ancient Christian Writers 57 (New York: Newman Press, 1997), pp. 384–85.
59. *Apophthegmata Patrum*, the alphabetical collection, Ammonas 4 (120C), from *The Sayings of the Desert Fathers, the Alphabetical Collection*, trans. Benedicta Ward (London: Mowbrays, 1975), p. 26.
 60. Kuno Meyer, ed., "Echtra Nerai," *Révue Celtique* 10 (1889): 212–228. See translation by John Carey in *The Celtic Heroic Age*, ed. Koch with John Carey, fourth edn (Aberystwyth, UK: Celtic Studies Publications, 2003), pp. 127–32.
 61. For a story of Túan and St. Finian of Movilla, well-explicated by John Carey in *A Single Ray of the Sun*, 7–10, see Carey, "Scél Tuain meic Chairill," *Ériu* 35 (1984): 92–111. On Fintan, see "Colloquoy between Fintan and the Hawk of Achill," ed. Kuno Meyer, in *Anecdota from Irish Manuscripts I*, ed. R. I Best et al. (Halle, 1907), pp. 24–39. Fintan also was the name of the one-eyed salmon of knowledge in early Irish lore. Regarding Mongán, see *Scél asa mberar combad hé Find Mac Cumail Mongán 7 aní día fil aided Fothaid Airgid a scél so síis, Lebo na hUidre* 133a25–133b17, trans. Anne Lea in *The Celtic Heroic Age*, pp. 218–20.
 62. From *Expositiones in Ierarchiam coelestem Iohannis Scoti Eriugenae*, ed. J. Barbet, CCCM 31 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1975), 2.5. Paul Rorem, trans., *Eriugena's Commentary on the Dionysian Celestial Hierarchy*, Studies and Texts 150 (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2005), p. 198.
 63. "Many voiced" is Maximus the Confessor's phrase for apophatic silent-speech before the altar during the Eucharistic rite (*Mystagogy*, PG 91: 681D), trans. L. Michael Harrington, *Sacred Place in Early Medieval Neoplatonism* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), p. 138; "one-mouthed" reflects a traditional phrase from Eastern Christian musical theory (Dimitry Conomos, "Preface: A Brief Survey of the History of Byzantine and Post-Byzantine Chant," www.stanthonymonastery.org/music/History.pdf [accessed August 3, 2008]).
 64. Julia Kristeva, "Women's Time," in *The Portable Kristeva*, updated edn, ed. Kelly Oliver (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), pp. 351–71.
 65. *Ibid.*, p. 355. Regarding Augustine's relation of linear time and grammar of the sentence, see Brian Stock, *Augustine the Reader* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), pp. 76–77.
 66. See John McGuckin, *Saint Gregory of Nazianzus, an Intellectual Biography* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2001), pp. 5, 281, 290.
 67. Lisa M. Bitel, "Hail Brigit!: Gender, Authority, and Worship in Early Ireland," in *Irish Women's History*, ed. Alan Hayes and Diane Urquhart (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2003), pp. 1–14. In Germanic cultures, "The cult of Odin grew as the emergent kings built up armies of men whose kindred commitments had been preempted by loyalty to their new lord": Craig R. Davis, *Beowulf and the Demise of Germanic Legend in England* (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1996), pp. 23–24.
 68. Christina Harrington, *Women in a Celtic Church, Ireland 450–1150* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 289.
 69. Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland*, pp. 396–405.
 70. *Ibid.*, pp. 400–14 throughout.
 71. Evan Thompson, *Mind in Life: Biology, Phenomenology, and the Sciences of Mind* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard/Belknap Press, 2007), chapter 12, "Empathy and Enculturation."

72. *Contra* Kevin Kiernan, *Beowulf and the Beowulf Manuscript*, rev. edn (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1997), and others who have postulated a late date for the poem in the tenth or eleventh centuries, both earlier scholarly consensus and some late-twentieth-century reexaminations of the issue point to an eighth-century date, although a later date would not substantially change arguments here (Michael Lapidge, "The Archetype of *Beowulf*," *Anglo-Saxon England* 29 (2000): 5–41; Patrick Wormald, "Bede, 'Beowulf' and the Conversion of the Anglo-Saxon Aristocracy," in *Bede and Anglo-Saxon England*, British Archaeological Reports 46, ed. Robert T. Farrell (Oxford: British Archaeological Reports, 1978), pp. 32–95; and Sam Newton, *The Origins of Beowulf and the Pre-Viking Kingdom of East Anglia* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1993). The sparse evidence for the original dialect of the poem suggests an Anglian provenance in the Midlands (Robert Bjork and Anita Obermeier, "Date, Provenance, Author, Audiences," in *A Beowulf Handbook* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), p. 26 [13–34]). This evidence is reinforced by the central presence in the text of the name of the ancestral Anglian king Offa and analogues between that reference and alleged marital sufferings of the eighth-century Mercian King Offa [*Beowulf and its Analogues*, trans. G.N. Garmonsway and Jacqueline Simpson (London: J.M. Dent & Sons, 1968), pp. 236–37]. Also significant, given the probable role of a religious center as the site of the composition, is the "close connection between the Mercian dynasty, whose ancestors appear in *Beowulf*, and which...produced successive kings named Beornwulf and Wiglaf in the early ninth century, and many of the most important religious foundations of the time": Wormald, "Bede, *Beowulf*, and the Conversion," p. 54. In addition, there are the poem's analogues with the *Lives* of St. Guthlac and their eighth-century Anglian provenance, apparently under Mercian overlordship. A later Viking link still seems tenuous in light of ancestral concerns of the Mercian dynasty, as well as probable earlier East Anglian connections to Scandinavia. Richard North's connection of the poem with names in early-ninth-century Mercia [*The Origins of Beowulf from Vergil to Wiglaf* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007)] could mistake as originary figures those named as a result of the poem's tradition, given the evidence already mentioned.
73. There are analogues to this monstrous watery conflict in Irish. But in *Aided Fhergusa maic Léide* ["The Death of Fergus Mac Leide"; "Death of King Fergus," in *Silva Gadelica, A Collection of Tales in Irish with Extracts Illustrating Persons and Places* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1892), vol. 1, pp. 238–52, vol. 2, pp. 269–85], a late addition to the Ulster Cycle, the conflict is less charged with moral concerns of hubris and community than the Old English narrative. In Irish hagiography, the most famous encounter with a denizen of the deeps, that of St. Columba with the prototypical Loch Ness monster, ends merely with the saint commanding the monster to return to the depths, the saint having saved a companion in an apparent test of spiritual power with the beast. There is no detailed or negative description of the waters or dramatic destruction of the creature as in *Beowulf* [Adomnán, *Vita S. Columbae* 2.27; trans. Richard Sharpe, *Life of St. Columba* (London: Penguin, 1991), pp. 175–76]. Likewise, St. Antony's struggle with a watery serpent in Athanasius' archetypal desert hagiographic account involves no slaying of the monster, which is pacified. And in *Táin Bó Fraích* [ed. Wolfgang Meid (Dublin: Dublin Institute, 1967)], often cited as an Irish analogue to *Beowulf*'s struggle in the mere, the hero's fight with the water monster occurs in the context of a wooing challenge, and he is helped by his lover who provides him with a sword, unlike *Beowulf*'s encounter in the mere, where he is alone

with the monster and finds the giants' sword in the monsters' hoard, in order to kill a woman. In the Irish story, there is no watery landscape narrative, and no allegorical connection of the landscape with either the divine, moral, or civilizing concerns. The water monsters in *Táin Bó Fróech*, Columba's encounter at Loch Ness, and Antony's encounter are also wholly nonhuman by contrast with the demonized *Grendelcyn*.

74. Rosamond McKitterick, *History and Memory in the Carolingian World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 281.
75. See Jennifer Neville, *Representations of the Natural World in Old English Poetry*, Cambridge Studies in Anglo-Saxon England 27 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 38. Nicholas Howe has discussed the constructed yet layered nature of early English literary landscapes (and their sense of pilgrim-exile) in "The Landscape of Anglo-Saxon England: Inherited, Invented, Imagined." See also his *Migration and Mythmaking in Anglo-Saxon England*, rev. edn (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2001); and "Looking for Home in Anglo-Saxon England," in *Home and Homelessness in the Medieval and Renaissance World* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2004), pp. 143–63. For physical aspects of Anglo-Saxon landscape, see Della Hooke, *The Landscape of Anglo-Saxon England* (London 1998), and Oliver Rackham's works on early English woodlands. Also, for a helpful collection of essays on landscape edited by Anglo-Saxonists, see Clare A. Lees and Gillian R. Overing, eds., *A Place to Believe in, Locating Medieval Landscapes* (University Park: Pennsylvania University Press, 2006).
76. *Felix's Life of St. Guthlac*, ed. Bertram Colgrave (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1956); Old English poetic versions "A" and "B" of Guthlac's *Life* can be found in Bernard Muir, ed., *The Exeter Anthology of Old English Poetry*, rev. edn, 2 vols (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2000). The *Guthlac B* poem's discussion of the soul and body represents an extension of the haunted barrow into a more directly Christian allegorical realm.
77. The archaeologist John Shephard relates a pattern of barrows like Guthlac's to development of a strongly centralized manorial system in the medieval Midlands by contrast to Kent ("The Social Identity of the Individual in Isolated Barrows and Barrow Cemeteries in Anglo-Saxon England," in *Space, Hierarchy and Society*, British Archaeological Reports International Series 59, ed. B.C. Burnham and J. Kingsbury (Oxford: B.A.R., 1979), p. 70 [47–79]). By the mid- or late-Anglo-Saxon period, the Midlands led development of "open field" communally allotted holdings and nucleated settlement landscapes, based on archaeological and historical evidence that also suggests a strong system of local lordship (C.J. Bond, "Field Systems" in *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. Michael Lapidge et al. (Oxford 1999), p. 184 [183–86]; see also Hooke, *The Landscape of Anglo-Saxon England*, pp. 105–138).
78. The Germanic notion of *wyrd*, as explicated by Paul Bauschatz [*The Well and the Tree: World and Time in Early Germanic Culture* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1982)], could interact in different ways with variant emphases on free will in Christian cultures. Even in *Beowulf*, *wyrd* could merge with either Augustinian predestination and linear temporality or with a system of asynchronous temporalities complicit in a soteriology more fully synergizing grace and free will. Yet it was the colonizing temporality that gained the upper hand in Western politics, a political and ecclesiological development more than a theological one.

79. See discussion in Julia Kristeva, "Dostoevsky, the Writing of Suffering, and Forgiveness," in *Black Sun: Depression and Melancholia*, trans. Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989), p. 211 [173–218].
80. As exemplified by his influential exegesis on Job.
81. In this case the contrast with a purportedly explicit menstrual flow at the end of the *Táin* in both recensions may be instructive: Medb is humiliated but not slain, and the hypermasculine warriors of Ulster themselves appear to be satirized as the bulls that are the objects of the battles elude captivity in spectacular landscape-forming death.
82. Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror* (1980), trans. Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), p. 71.
83. Julia Kristeva, "Women's Time," in *Critical Theory Since 1965*, ed. Hazard Adams and Leroy Searle (Tallahassee: University Presses of Florida, 1986), pp. 472–73.
84. Brian Stock, *Augustine the Reader* (Cambridge MA, 1995), pp. 76–77. The emerging Augustinian-Gregorian conception in the early medieval West of an objectified phenomenal world is again theologically related to the developing notion of grace as objectifiedly created (J. Patout Burns, "Grace," in *Augustine through the Ages, an Encyclopedia*, ed. Allan D. Fitzgerald (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999), p. 396 [391–398]), and of theophany as mainly mediated through created objects, all expressed in allegorical artistic styles.
85. See Kristeva, *Powers of Horror*, p. 210.
86. See "Dream of the Rood," in *The Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records, A Collective Edition, II. The Vercelli Book*, ed. George Philip Krapp (New York: Columbia University Press, 1932), pp. 61–66. The current standard edition is Michael Swanton, ed., *The Dream of the Rood*, rev. edn. (Exeter, UK: University of Exeter Press, 1996).
87. In this brief discussion I rely heavily for background on Éamonn Ó Carragáin's masterful *Ritual and the Rood, Liturgical Images and the Old English Poems of the Dream of the Rood tradition*, The British Library Studies in Medieval Culture (London and Toronto: The British Library and University of Toronto Press, 2005).
88. For a sense of the rich hybridities of Whithorn's landscape associations (including potential pagan ones), see Peter Hill, "Whithorn, Latinus and the origins of Christianity in northern Britain," in *Image and Power in the Archaeology of Early Medieval Britain, Essays in Honour of Rosemary Cramp*, ed. Helena Hamerow and Arthur McGregor (Oxford: Oxbow, 2001), pp. 23–32.
89. Fred Orton, "Northumbrian Sculpture (the Ruthwell and Bewcastle Monuments: Questions of Difference)," in *Northumbria's Golden Age*, ed. A. Jane Hawkes and Susan Mills (Stroud, UK: Sutton, 1999), pp. 216–26. Another analogue related directly to Bernicia and the cultural hybridities of the Ruthwell Cross lies in tree/cross associations with St. Oswald's victory over Cadwallon and subsequent martyrdom at the hands of Penda; see C. Tolley, "Oswald's Tree," in *Pagans and Christians, the Interplay between Christian Latin and Traditional Germanic Cultures in Early Medieval Europe*, Germana Latina II, Mediaevalia Groningaa 16, ed. T. Hofstra et al. (Groningen, Neth.: Egbert Forsten, 1995), pp. 35–69, 149–73. The Irish Adomnán referred to Oswald in the opening of his *Vita* of Columba as emperor of Britain ordained by God; by this account, it was Columba who appeared to Oswald in a vision that prompted the making of the cross before the battle with Cadwallon.
90. Another example of an environmental complexity of Anglo-Saxon texts is found in the Old English homily on the Transfiguration, which conveys a sense of how

- "All creation was ontologically related in its being and thus responsible to God's commandments. . . Sin-wrought senescence even damaged the heavens," although Creation's shared sense of guilt there is clearly Augustinian rather than Cassianite (Thomas J. Heffernan, "The Sun Shall be Turned to Darkness and the Moon to Blood," in *Place, Space, and Landscape in Medieval Narrative*, Tennessee Studies in Literature 43, ed. Laura L. Howes (Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 2007), p. 75 [63–78]).
91. On the probable Columbanian background of the seventh-century bishop of the East Angles, Felix, e.g., see Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland*, pp. 365–66; also on the relation of Columbanian monasticism to the spread of the Benedictine Rule in mixed-rule form, p. 388.
 92. On the latter in relation to trees, see Thomas H. Olgren, "The Pagan Iconography of Christian Ideas: Tree-Lore in Anglo-Viking England," *Mediaevistik* 1 (1989): 145–73.
 93. John M. Hill, *The Anglo-Saxon Warrior Ethic: Reconstructing Lordship in Early English Literature* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2000).
 94. Northrop Frye, "The Argument of Comedy," rpt. in *Shakespeare: Modern Essays in Criticism*, ed. Leonard F. Dean (London: Oxford University Press, 1957; rev. 1967).
 95. J.R.R. Tolkien, "On Fairy-Stories," in *Essays Presented to Charles Williams*, ed. C.S. Lewis (London: Oxford University Press, 1947), pp. 38–89.
 96. Bede, *Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum* 2.2; *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, rev. edn, trans. Leo Sherley-Price (London: Penguin, 1990), pp. 104–107. Bede himself in many ways embodied the hybridities of archipelagic cultures, with ecclesiastic-monastic mentors including Benedict Biscop (scion of an Anglo-Saxon noble family and associated with the Greek Archbishop Theodore, with a book-collection emphasizing on Augustine of Hippo's works and a liking for Romanesque architecture) and Abbot Ceolfrith, friend of Adomnán of Iona.
 97. See, e.g., in addition to ancient and probably linguistic associations of oaks and druids, Kat Godeu and commentary in Marged Haycock, *Legendary Poems from the Book of Taliesin* (Aberystwyth: CMCS, 2007); Fergus Kelly, "Trees in Early Ireland," *Irish Forestry. Journal of the Society of Irish Foresters* 56 (1999): 39–57; Kay Muhr, "Trees in Ireland in Early Traditions and Place Names," *Irish Insight* no. 2, <http://homepage.eircom.net/~archaeology/two/trees.htm> [accessed December 29, 2008].
 98. Frye, "The Argument of Comedy," pp. 86, 88.

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